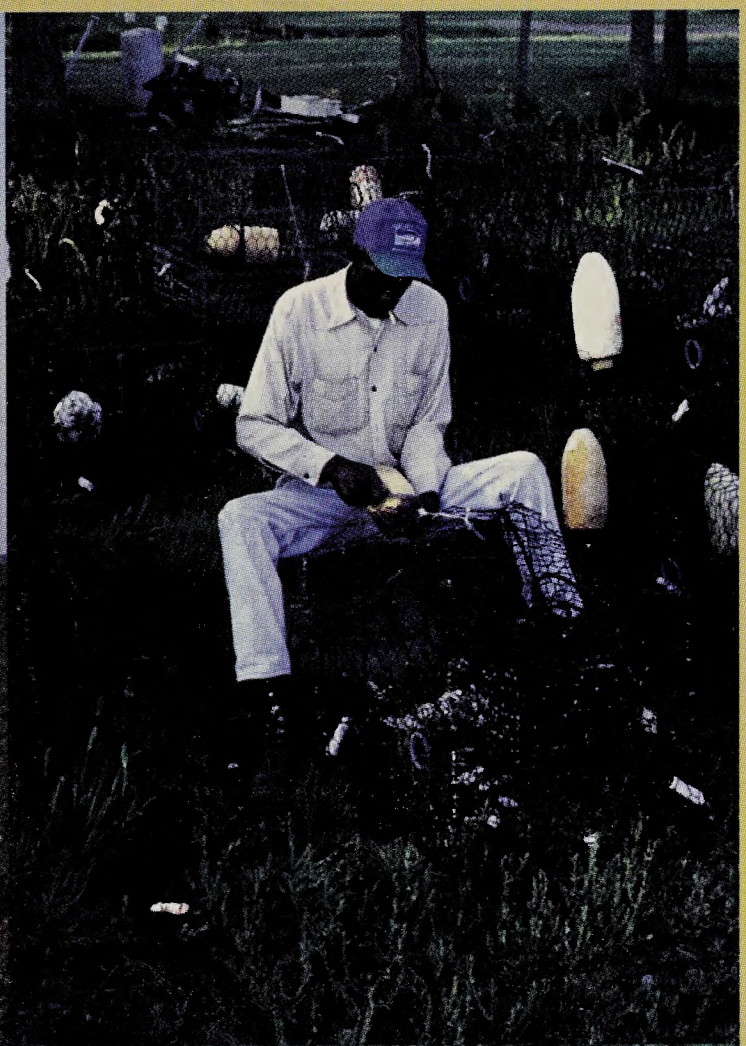


The North Carolina Coastal Folklife Survey

Beaufort•Bertie•Dare•Hyde•Tyrrell•Washington Counties

By Jill Hemming, W.T. Mansfield, and Ann Kaplan



North Carolina Folklore Journal

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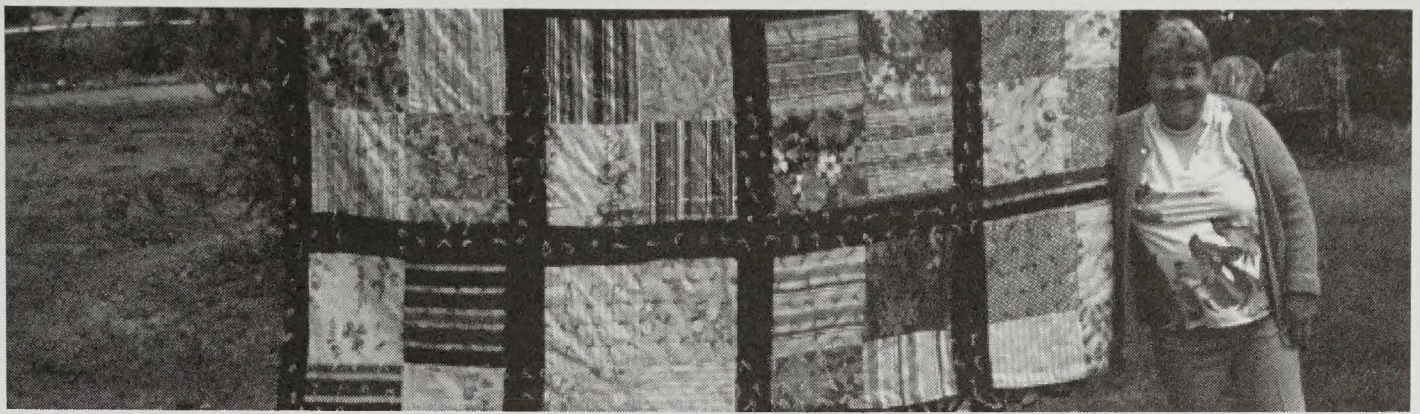
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The North Carolina Folklife Survey: A Preface

By Wayne Martin & Beverly Patterson

Seems like there's nowhere else in the world I would want to stay—only right here.

—Eva Mizelle, Bertie County

During the summer of 1997, the Folklife Program of the North Carolina Arts Council organized a survey of traditional culture in northeastern North Carolina. We asked three fieldworkers with expertise in folklore to document a broad sampling of cultural traditions in areas that have not received much attention from folklife specialists. To accomplish this, our researchers—folklorists Jill Hemming and Bill Mansfield, and University of North Carolina folklore graduate student Ann Kaplan—worked independently in counties assigned to them. Our contracts with Jill Hemming and Bill Mansfield gave them each twenty days in the field; Ann Kaplan, our summer intern, had only ten days.

They went about their work with great enthusiasm and energy—visiting people, exploring traditions in the region, and recording interviews and events when permitted. They equipped themselves with cameras and tape recorders and documented their work with sound recordings, color slides and color prints, and interview logs with partial transcriptions of selected interviews. The fieldworkers also provided written reports that not only presented their observations but also offered suggestions about ways these might prove useful in the future.

This report merges the three originals. Each fieldworker contributed valuable perspectives. For example, Jill Hemming's thoughtful analysis gives this current document its conceptual framework, and her observations add significantly to its substance. Bill Mansfield greatly expanded the voices included here with his attention to occupational

lore and his extensive use of quotations from recorded interviews. Ann Kaplan, despite limited time, noted important details that give readers a glimpse of the wealth of traditional culture in Bertie County. We hope this combined report will serve as a planning tool for coastal communities that want to further explore, recognize, and support some of their most distinctive cultural traditions.

The Folklife Program is grateful to the many individuals and organizations that contributed to this project. We particularly appreciate help from David Taylor at the American Folklife Center in the Library of Congress, who guided us in the very early planning stages. During that time, Professors Charles G. Zug III and Glenn D. Hinson, and Sound and Image Librarian Michael Taft generously co-hosted a workshop at the University of North Carolina in Chapel Hill for fieldworkers and others interested in this project.

Regional support for the project has been truly outstanding, and we especially want to thank everyone who has contributed to that. In the planning phases, we received invaluable assistance from our regional partners: the Beaufort County Arts Council, Partnership for the Sounds, which is developing sites in Hyde, Tyrrell, Beaufort, and Bertie Counties; Pocosin Arts in Tyrrell County; and Somerset Place in Washington County. We owe special thanks to Paula Bass, J.D. Brickhouse, Roy Clarke, Jean Forbes, Annette Gibbs, Mac Gibbs, Carlisle Harrell, Douglas Hoffman, Judy Jennette, Feather Phillips, Dorothy Spruill Redford, Roger Rulifson, Bob Spivey, Don Temple, and Jackie Peoples Woolard for helping in numerous ways that included arranging housing and work space for the researchers, meeting with them and with us, and introducing our fieldworkers to local residents. The Bertie County Arts Council and the Windsor Chamber of Commerce joined this group to give our fieldworkers a warm welcome and help them cover a lot of ground in a short time.

Most of all we are deeply grateful to the many individuals in the region who served our fieldworkers as guides and collaborators: Corky Ambrose, Leon Ballance, Alice Basnight, Jesse "Gus" Basnight, William Baxton, Bill Beattie, Buddy Brickhouse, Doris Brickhouse, Eunice Brickhouse, Libby Brickhouse, Leon Bryant, McKinley Bryant, Vonbeulah Bryant, Angie Bowden, Charles Cahoon, Judy Cahoon, Lee Cahoon, Tommy Cahoon, Mary Callas, Captain Neill's Seafood, Earl Carawan, Maxwell "Macky" Carawan, Percy Carawan, Rawls Carter, David Cecelski, Chapel Hill Missionary Baptist Church, Anna Jean Clarke, Anna Collins, Doris Comstock, The Copper Kettle Restaurant, Mary Helen Cox, Lois Cornick, Wallace Craddock, Creswell Women's Softball Team, Roger Culliper, Etta Mae Cuthrell, William Cuthrell, Ray Davenport, Walter Davenport, Robin Dunbar, East Lake Holiness Church, T.J. Etheridge,

Vicky Furlough, Free Temple Ministries Women's Gospel Chorus, Margaret Gallagher, Lavita Garriss, C.D. Gibbs, Marco Gibbs, Mildred Gibbs, Jesse Godwin, Gum Neck Free Will Baptist Church, Nellie Gray, Leroy Haire, The Happy Followers, The Harbor Lights, Asa Harden Jr., Bennie Harris, Ted Hemilright, Heritage House Restaurant, Barbara Hill, Mavis Hill, Hope Mennonite Church, David Hopkins, Grey Hopkins, Monna Lou Hopkins, Ethel Jackson, Idonna Jackson, Glyn Jarvis, Joseph Johnson, Barbara Jones, Buddy Jones, Burvell Jones, Flossie Jones, J.C. Jones, Lawrence Jones, Phil Jones, Syble Knotts, Kodon Leary, Dr. Harry Liverman, Hannah Mackey, Martell Marshall, Dominga Martinez, Elaine Mayo, Priscilla Mayo, Alma McClees, Phil McClees, Johnnie Midgette, Gail Miller, Eva Mizelle, Thelma Mooney, Mount Gould Museum, Mt. Pilgrim Church of Christ, Mt. Zinia Missionary Baptist Church, Mike Mullen, Dessie Norman, Charles Ogletree, Midge Ogletree, Sandra Owens, Arnette Parker, Jacob Parker, Perry-Wynns Fish Company, Bobby Phelps, Loretta Phelps, Willy Phillips, Jennifer Plucker, Adalia Powell, Jack Powell, Michael Pratt, Terry Pratt, Virginia Pugh, Marie Respass, Richard Rhodes, Reverend James Rodgers, Ondra Rodgers, Delores Rose, Robert Ross, Francis Rowton, Dennis Russell, The Scuppernong Café, Lula Sessoms, Bill Smithwick, Louis Spear, Elizabeth Spencer, R.S. Spencer, Edna Spruill, Fay Spruill, Wesley Spruill, St. Joan of Arc Catholic Church, St. John's Baptist Church, Bob Stuart, Scott Sukeforth, Martha Swain, Lonnie Sykes and family, Dimple Taylor, Harry Thompson, James "Little Brother" Topping, Melvin Twiddy, Virginia Wade, Eva White, Carl Willis, Charlie Wilson, Ruth Wilson, Nora Winborne, Annie Wrighton, Lee Wynns, and Zion's Grove Baptist Church.

Many others contributed to this project, and we are very grateful to all. In particular, we want to acknowledge our fieldworkers: Jill Hemming, Bill Mansfield, and Ann Kaplan. Their dedicated work brings into sharper focus a region rich in traditional arts and culture.



Introduction

For a brief time, we have plunged into the local history, personalities, and ways of life of the people living in Washington, Tyrrell, Hyde, and Bertie Counties, and we have also ventured into parts of Dare and Beaufort Counties. Our job was to take a mental/photographic/audio inventory of the cultural resources and assets of these coastal counties. To do that, we drove more than 3,000 miles and searched out people in locales as varied as Askewville, Goat Neck, the Pea Ridge Convenience Store, a pound-net fishing boat on the Scuppernong River, the Hope Mennonite Church at Grassy Ridge, the Mt. Zinia Missionary Baptist Church, and the Perry-Wynns Fish Company—to name just a few.

Our report differs from, and complements, the reports of other professionals who have also surveyed the area. Archaeologists, geologists, and historical preservationists, for example, have written about the region's prehistory, natural resources, and architecture. As professional folklorists, however, our chief interests lie in the people now living in the region, those who ply the trades and occupations that developed here, who carry regional accents, who cook their foods in traditional ways, who sing and worship together in local churches, and who tell stories about their experiences living in a certain bend of woods. This human landscape and the things people say, do, make, and believe are what we have tried to record. Like other folklorists, we often suggested what kind of information we wanted by listing the ways people express who they are: language, architecture, music, play, story, dance, food, handicraft, belief, worship, occupation, associations, art. Such expressions, when handed down over generations, gradually define and distinguish the culture of a region.

The purpose of our work is to shed light on these distinctive cultural qualities. We hope it will be useful to anyone wanting to encourage, preserve, and celebrate traditional regional culture. Potential users of the material might include a teacher presenting a unit on local history who wants to invite a long-time logger to talk to a class; organizers of a

local festival who want to focus on what is authentic and appropriate to their area; or an economic planning board that wants to enhance the local economy by encouraging the development of home and cottage industries employing traditional craftspeople. For this written report, we have organized information in four large themes that we feel best reflect the folklife in the area we surveyed: Sense of Place, Occupation, Community Life, and Domestic Life.



Sense of Place

A “sense of place” implies that understanding a particular landscape may require looking beyond its geographic characteristics, that human imagination and experience have played with the surfaces and created structures of meaning.

Homecomings and Memorial Services

Many people in the coastal counties can claim long family histories in the region. Names like McClees and Spruill, Brickhouse and Ambrose crop up again and again—in the phone book, on gravestones, across store fronts—down to the person shaking your hand. Old family names connect people to parcels of land and old homesteads, and family members come from near and far for events such as the homecomings and memorial services that fill the calendar in spring, summer, and fall. One such gathering is the annual three-day reunion held by the Joe Sykes family of Alligator. Great-grandchild Janice Sykes explained,

We all descend on the original homestead. And we do this every Memorial Day. And we do the memorial service at the graveyard. We pay homage to the descendants that have gone on before us. And we do this in celebration of our family and where we came from. (CFS-JH-005)

Anyone who has attended one of these gatherings can attest to the complex mix of family stories and genealogy narrated by older family members. Visits to the graves of the deceased and walks around the old homestead set all those stories and remembrances into motion. And the younger generations who pause and listen can gain insight into her phrase, “where we came from.” She refers, of course, not just to land and old houses, but to the people and lives that have been a part of that landscape.

Other residents have become experts on local community history. Some know not only family names and lineages of many residents but also

where their families came from originally. Some talk knowledgeably about early industries and community life.

Lois Cornick at the Pea Ridge Convenience Store, for example, knows stories about wine making in the Pea Ridge community up through the fifties. Others include Loretta Phelps, who has worked to renovate the Davenport Homestead (c. 1770) in Mt. Tabor; Buddy Brickhouse, fourth generation shopkeeper in Gum Neck, who carries the lore and genealogy of generations of Gum Neck inhabitants under his baseball cap; Gus Basnight of East Lake, who grew up in Buffalo City and can still name every house, store, and building that was there before the swamp took over; and Harry Thompson, who has applied his passion for history to the exhibits and programs at the Port O' Plymouth Museum. These individuals are treasures to their communities—people who connect the present to the past.

Mixed into this group are the local publishers of regional writing and newspaper columns that highlight community history and characters. They can reinforce a sense of place by printing collections of local stories, recollections, and by highlighting the traditional nature of ongoing community events. Such information offers visitors and newcomers a chance to understand the “natives” a little better.

The Land and Its Influence

Communities respond to the environment around them. It influences how people make a living and how they entertain themselves. We look for those connections in people's occupations, hobbies, and stories to increase our awareness of the importance of geography and our appreciation for the human creativity that responds to that landscape. Because fishing culture thrives in these counties where there is a lot of water, many people in the region know how to make an eel pot, cook salt herring, and bait a trotline for crabs. Because of the impassability of the swamps, many deer hunters train long-legged dogs, and they use them to run the deer out to the logging roads rather than go into the woods themselves. As Wallace Craddock of Pea Ridge explained:

Now we would ride around on all these roads. And it was in blocks like a mile or half-a-mile blocks. There were miles and miles and miles of them. And what we would do is ride around until we found what was like a fresh track. And we had what we called a trail dog—at least one. Well, everybody wanted one, half the folks didn't have one. And all mine would [run deer out to the road]. (CFS-JH-011)

The abundance of black bears in the region has generated an endless number of stories about bears. Some of them detail encounters in the

wild, close scrapes and bears that were shot. Judy Jones Cahoon, who grew up in Gum Neck on a family farm, tells a story about the baby bear that her brother brought home:

The first night or two it was so tiny, dad and mama put the bear in the bed with them and took a dungarees leg and tied up both ends of that now, putting that bear in there and tying it both ends. This way the little thing can't git. It will stay warm; it will sleep in the bed between us so that our body keeps it warm because—well, we lived in a very cold, old open house. So the fire went out in the middle of the night. Well, they knew they had to keep the baby warm so they slept with it the first night. That booger tore its way out of that dungaree leg. My daddy woke up the next morning with that bear on his chest just a-digging and a-nuzzling. He was ready for nursing. [Daddy] said, "Mabel, take this thing and go tend to it, and I'll never, never sleep with another she bear!" (CFS-JH-007)

Constructed Landscapes—Ditches, Mailboxes, Signs

People often mark where they live in significant ways. A plow-shaped mailbox communicates the importance of agriculture and its long history in the area. Miles and miles of ditches along roads and through fields attest to the expertise of local people in draining and redirecting water to make land usable. The homemade sign on Highway 64 telling drivers "Jesus is the only way" adds a visual exclamation point to the dozens of churches that line the highway. There is a term in literature, *synecdoche*, for a part that implies a whole. Saying "A sail!" can mean that an entire ship has come into sight. These symbols constructed on the landscape imply whole systems of culture and history and meaning. Even the large vegetable gardens bordering house after house are eloquent testimony to a deep-seated rural ethic of self-sufficiency and living off the land.

Place Names and Their Stories

Besides the physical marks and structures people make on the land, there exists a whole geography of the mind that includes place names, stories about various landmarks, and remembrances of the way some part of the landscape used to be. Fishermen, for example, use names to designate where they are situated. When the Davenport brothers of Columbia returned to pound-net fishing in the late 1960s, they were able to use some set-ups of earlier fishermen. One of their nets is called the "Huff Net" for a fisherman two generations back who first set a net there. They cannot say exactly who Mr. Huff was, but they know they are using his placement for a net. Their explanation for the "Skull Creek Net" leads



Wind paddle yard art in Roper, Washington County. 31 May 1997.
 Photograph by Jill Hemming. CFS-JU-029-4.

to a story about the fish processing company that used to dump all the catfish remains at the head of that creek, making it look like “a catfish graveyard.”

These are names used by very few. But some naming can even become “official.” Down the road towards Gum Neck, there is a street sign designated Pity My Shoe. Two stories exist to justify the odd name. One says that a man named Peter Mashue used to live down that lane, so that was its name—Peter Mashue. After he died, people slowly forgot he had ever lived there, and the name corrupted into Pity My Shoe. Another version claims that the road had the biggest rocks, biggest holes, and worst mud. People who walked down the road would ruin their shoes; thus, Pity My Shoe. Whatever the truth may be, people enjoy hearing and telling the story when passing by that way.

The stories people tell imbue landscapes with emotional overtones—making a particular stretch of road scary or a church structure humorous. In East Lake, members of the Holiness Church still recall and take pride in the fact that the church’s foundations were built on whiskey kegs—a story that can be verified by looking underneath the boards of the building. Other stories and legends remain in mystery, obscured by time or questionable origins. Many in Dare and Tyrrell counties circulate hair-raising explanations for the disappearance of a whole community of Russians from Buffalo City, implying murder and intrigue. Others state that the canals of these same counties are full of lost whiskey kegs and



Acrylic painting by Dessie Norman, Pea Ridge, Washington County. 31 May 1997. Photograph by Jill Hemming. CFS-JH-029-20.

swear that they plan to find a way to track them down and retrieve them. When she was teaching school in Creswell, Feather Phillips of Columbia uncovered a whole series of scary stories told by her students about a legendary local character who possessed supernatural powers.

Memory Paintings—Local Artists and Local Themes

Some people prefer to tell their stories without words. Several coastal residents turn to the paintbrush and visual arts to remember and share their recollections of certain scenes and landscapes. Max Liverman, a native of Gum Neck, sketches the wildlife of Tyrrell County and draws memory pictures of his early years, capturing with great detail the world around him, past and present. Syble Knotts tells about growing up near Fort Landing and being raised by a strong and resourceful grandmother, whose day might easily include cooking for visiting bird hunters, guiding hunters through the waters of the region, and rowing across the sound in her wooden skiff. Syble Knotts's husband Kelly painted pictures of the water and local life around Fort Landing that illustrate and complement her stories of growing up in that region. Dessie Norman digs local clay from a nearby ditch bank for her sculptures and often paints portraits of people she has known in her church and neighborhood.



Occupation

Every settlement in the coastal counties has distinct features in its economic history. Some areas like Sandy Ridge and Gum Neck have relied primarily on agriculture while others like Buffalo City boomed during big logging years. The most typical pattern, though, is one in which people worked as many trades as necessary to make ends meet. Fay Spruill of Pea Ridge exemplifies this strategy. Before retiring, he fished commercially on and off throughout his life, generally as seasonal employment. In summers, he would find a job in farming, construction, or lumbering, and he did some trapping in the winter. Often, a little bit of crabbing here, construction work there, kept families going. Jesse Godwin, who ties nets in the yard behind his house in Columbia, says this seasonal income pays for the groceries. Changes in industries and the economy demand that people adjust or move away. With the mechanization of agriculture, many people who relied on seasonal harvest work began to travel the long distance to the beach, where service jobs in the summer may become the main source of income.

Nevertheless, a large portion of the employed population still earns some part of its income from working in traditional occupations related to agriculture, woods, or water. From the beginning, settlers relied on the rich natural resources of the region, and visitors today still see evidence on the landscape in fields of corn, logging roads cut into the forest, and crab pots piled in a backyard. More recent markers are baseball caps worn around town with seafood and seed company logos stamped across the front. The seasonal nature of much work influences the community calendar. In the summertime, for example, high school students in Tyrrell County gear up for grading potatoes, and migrant Latina women arrive to pick crab meat at coastal processing plants. Even people in the coastal counties who have not worked in these specific jobs can trace family ties to one or more of these occupations or have family members currently involved in traditional work. In this way, coastal people maintain a strong sense of connection to the ways of life associated with

working on the land, on the water, and in the woods. Any number of people in all of these counties can share work experiences, knowledge, and lore of these occupations, as well as descriptions of the tremendous changes that have occurred in all of them over the past thirty years.

In Bertie County, for example, change is evident in farming, one of the most traditional occupations. The pattern of land ownership has changed gradually as a result of families selling pieces of larger properties. Many people, however, continue to work as farm laborers or tenant farmers. Logging operations, commercial fishing, and crabbing are other occupations often passed down in families. Terry Pratt, who now works with his son, learned crabbing and fishing from his father and still maintains pound nets, the oldest form of fishing in the area. Family ownership and management of local businesses—furniture and restoration shops, community stores, and beauty shops—are a more recent part of the local occupational tradition. Newer employment patterns are evident in service sector jobs. County government offices, health services, and local support businesses such as banks, grocery stores, and restaurants are part of this changing pattern. In the northeastern section of the county, a similar concentration of businesses surrounds poultry farms and processing plants. A small population of Latin American immigrants living in the north central and northeastern parts of the county reportedly works on farms and in poultry processing plants. Originally seasonal, some are becoming permanent residents.

Hunting guides and trappers give Hyde County a distinctive occupational community. Sparsely populated, the county has an abundance of wildlife in its wetlands and woodlands, especially in the Mattamuskeet Wildlife Refuge. For years, fur-bearing animals in this region provided a rich resource for those who knew how to trap, and the county's reputation for abundant game attracted sportsmen who came to hunt. Local men capitalized on their knowledge of both region and wildlife and hired themselves out as guides. Some families supplemented their income by boarding hunters in their homes. A number of people located in this survey talked about their hunting and trapping experiences, even when they had been contacted because of their expertise in something else. Although Robert Ross was primarily a boat builder and crab pot maker, he also enjoyed trapping. C.D. Gibbs gave an interview about sawmill operations, but he trapped too. An interview with Thelma Mooney about quilting eventually revealed that she ran a trap line and boarded hunters in her home.

Hunting, trapping, and crabbing are good subjects for illustrating the speech patterns of the region. Those who are quoted in these sections represent many who have spent most or all of their lives in the region. They have become their own best spokespersons. Local voices such as theirs would enhance any public presentation of the regional culture.



Sandra Owens sits in front of examples of her taxidermy work. Sound Side, Tyrrell County. 5 May 1997. Photograph by Jill Hemming. CFS-JH-002-1.

Hunting

Bill Mansfield initially visited William Cuthrell in Kilkenny (southern Tyrrell County) to investigate a hand-crafted scouring broom he made. As so often happened, the conversation also turned in other directions. When asked about hunting, he replied,

Did I? That's all I ever done. I used to be a guide. . . . I used to hunt in the fields out on this side of the lake. I never did no hunting in the lake. It was along back in the '40s. We had a-plenty of wild geese out there—good god a-mighty! I carried nine men out there one morning; we killed twenty-seven geese and was out of the field by eleven (CFS-WM-003)

Born in 1921, William Cuthrell made traps to catch rabbits and small birds like robins when he was a young boy. By the late 1920s and 1930s, he had begun hunting with his cousins, the Hudsons.

I used to hunt with them a lot when I was a boy. Now they bear hunted. Along then you could take a bear and kill him—and every Thursday they had a steamboat come up here and pick up eggs and chickens and stuff that people wanted to ship to Norfolk—you could take a bear and dress him out and ship him [to Norfolk]. He'd bring seventy-five to a hundred dollars. That was money along then! Big money! And that's the way they made their living. (CFS-WM-003)



William Cuthrell, hunting story teller, stands with a scouring broom he makes. Kilkenny, Tyrrell County. Photograph by W.T. Mansfield. CFS-WM-001-9.

His cousins and other hunters in his community not only taught him the ways of animals—when and where they could be found—but also how to turn this knowledge to economic gain by guiding hunters. William Cuthrell is an experienced hunter and very knowledgeable about hunting deer, bear, and water fowl, particularly in northern Hyde and southern Tyrrell counties. He talked about guiding parties of goose hunters and deer hunters.

Used to have a bunch of colored people out of New York, [they were] lawyers and doctors. I carried a bunch goose hunting one morning. I told them,

"We ain't gonna kill no goose." It had been a moonlight night and the sun shining just as pretty as it is right now, all day long. I said, "We won't kill a goose." One of them said to me, "Well, I'll tell you, it doesn't make any difference whether we kill a goose or not." He said, "We just want to get somewheres and relax." So I took them goose hunting. Didn't even see a goose that day. I told one of them, "I'm sorry we can't kill a goose," 'cause there weren't none flying. One of them said, "It don't make no difference to us. If we'd a-wanted a goose, we could've stayed home this week and worked this week and bought a trainload of geese." Now they come the second year, just the right time for the geese to be flying—killed their limit every day.

I just naturally enjoyed [deer hunting]. You take four or five good dogs, get after a deer and they run him like they're supposed to run him, it was music to me. I deer hunted five days of the week, sometimes six. I got five dollars per man, that's what I got. [Guides] today they'll get a hundred fifty to a hundred seventy-five dollars per man for goose hunting. I had a fellow come down here . . . he used to hunt with me, and he come down for four or five years. He deer hunted. He killed three or four deer. And he told me when he left, "William, I don't think I'll ever come back on more deer hunting. I've killed what I wanted." And I ain't never seen him since.

[From] here around Edenton, I had a bunch of people, and they'd come every Thursday, about ten or twelve head of them. . . . They were tobacco farmers. We killed a lot of deer. We'd go up there and throw the dogs out in the woods. They'd go out there and jump a deer and run him maybe four or five hours before he'd come overboard [jump in the canal] . . . and if it was a buck, we'd kill him. If it was a doe, we'd let 'em go. (CFS-WM-003).

Land use changes in Hyde County have affected the deer population. Corporate farms have removed the trees and undergrowth from large tracts of land to accommodate mechanized farming. This practice has destroyed the habitats for predators while providing unintended food—primarily corn and soy beans—for the deer.

We didn't have as many deer then as we got now. We got too many deer right now. They are getting overpopulated. [They] are eating up folks' crops. They are shooting them and leaving them in the field. Now I don't go along with that. If a man kills a deer, he should be made to bring him out. If he don't want him, there's plenty of widow women [that do]. Let somebody use him. (CFS-WM-003).

All activities generate stories, but hunting is especially suited for tales. William Cuthrell tells a story contrasting human folly with animal strength and cunning.

They used to trap bear back years ago. You could trap them like you do coon. This old fellow down the road here, Gus Brickhouse, he said, "If you ever catch [a bear], I want to kill him with a club. Well, [his stepuncle]

caught one . . . close to Kilkenny Landing. He come out and said, "Gus, all right now, I got him."

Gus said, "How big is he?"

"About two hundred fifty pounds."

"I'm gonna kill him with a club."

So he went to the woodpile and got him a club, just like he wanted. [His stepuncle] told him, "You can't kill that bear with that club."

"Huh! I'll show you." [Gus] went in there with the bear in the trap. He walks up pretty close to him, and he hauled back and hit him over the head with that club, and the bear fell right [over]. "I told you I could kill him with my arm!"

He said, "You just wait a few minutes." Well, that old bear begin to move. [Gus] walked over to hit him again, and [his stepuncle] said, "No, you ain't gonna hit him with him laying down. Now you wait till he gets on his feet." Well, the old bear got straight and got on his feet, and he said, "Now, go ahead and kill him."

Now, old man Gus wore a pair of bib overalls, like these I got on, and he hauled back to hit at that bear. That bear was watching him, and, buddy, he caught that pole with that paw, [and] snatched her right in two. That other foot caught in his overalls and cut the whole bib of them off, like a razor. That man turned white all over, as white as any bleaching you've ever seen. [His stepuncle] told him [Gus] what the bear'd do to him. If you ever hit him on the head one time, you ain't gonna hit him no more. That's just like trapping him. You set a trap for him, you catch him, and he gets out, you won't catch him no more. That's the end of that. He can smell that trap just as good as you can see it. He'll never get caught in it no more. (CFS-WM-003)

James "Little Brother" Topping offers another perspective on hunting. Born in 1952 in the southern part of Hyde County, he comes from an African American family with a reputation for being good hunters. Both his grandfather and father were hunters, and his father served as a guide for deer hunters. "We were known as hunters. [People all said], 'Those Toppings are going to hunt.'" He started hunting with his father and grandfather at the age of four. By the time he was six, he had killed a deer, and at twelve, he bagged his first goose. "Every afternoon after school, I'd grab the shotgun and try to kill a goose." From 1970 until 1972, he worked as a hunting guide for the wildlife refuge. His recollections about this job provide a valuable picture of an important part of Hyde County's hunting heritage.

James Topping grew up on the Canal Bank Road, close to the Mattamuskeet hunting lodge. While still in elementary school, he "hung around the lodge," carrying luggage and running errands for the hunters. He could earn two or three dollars in an afternoon, a sizable sum for a young boy. At age eighteen, while still in high school, a position for hunting guide opened at the wildlife refuge. In spite of his youth, the

refuge manager, John Davis, hired him because of his hunting experience. The hunting season ran from November 9 to January 2, and the hunting day usually ended well before 4 p.m. This schedule permitted him to make arrangements with his high school teachers to keep up with studies and work as guide.

I had a good location for hunting. Usually within thirty minutes to an hour, hunters would meet their limit. I'd be home by 9 a.m. If I wanted to go to school, I'd go on to school. If they had extra hunters wanting to go out, I'd take them out. (CFS-WM-013)

Hunters drew a lottery to determine the hunting blind assigned to them. They paid a fee to the wildlife refuge, and Topping received his salary from the refuge. He earned between two hundred and eighty to three hundred and eighty dollars a week. Guiding two hunters earned him twenty dollars, three hunters brought twenty-three dollars, and four hunters were worth twenty-eight dollars. "Guides are assigned to blinds. My blind was number four. So whoever drew number four got me as the guide."

While he had a great deal of experience as a hunter, James Topping had no experience as a guide. He called on the experience of the community of older guides, and they "helped all they could." They told him, for example, how to build a hunting blind. Unaware of any official plan for duck blinds, he modeled his blind on those of other hunting guides, "eight feet long and four feet wide, with four-foot high sides and an open top." The community of guides also loaned him decoys and showed him how to set them out, arranged according to wind direction.

Hunting started at sunrise. On a typical day, I'd leave the check-in hut at 5 a.m. and be ready to start shooting in an hour. This involved picking up decoys and the hunters and loading them in the boat, getting hunters situated in the blind, and setting decoys out. (CFS-WM-013)

After getting the hunters to the blind and helping them get their guns ready, he oriented them to the rules: honor the limits on different types of birds; don't shoot restricted game. "I learned how to identify the birds at a distance before they would get in range, and I'd tell them to shoot or don't shoot."

A guide needed more than knowledge of waterfowl to succeed. He had to know how to work with hunters. James Topping gained experience working with hunters in the years that he carried luggage and ran errands. His father's experience as a deer guide taught him a great deal about "public relations." In 1972, the wildlife refuge ended its hunting guide service, and his work as a guide came to an end.

Decoy Carving

The decoys once used to lure water fowl in range of hunters' guns are now recognized as a significant folk art, and Percy Carawan's reputation as a decoy carver is growing. Born in 1910 on Goose Creek Island in Pamlico County, he learned to make decoys from his father.

My dad made decoys back there 'fore I was born. He made working decoys. He'd make a sleeping duck, with his neck turned right around. Looked like his bill stuck in his down. He made all kinds of stuff. My dad was a man that could do anything he wanted to do. (CFS-WM-004)

Percy Carawan uses a block of juniper, roughed out with a hatchet, to form the decoy's body. A wood rasp, or more recently an electric sander, completes the shaping. To make the head and neck of the bird, he uses roots that are already shaped and curved similar to the actual bird's neck.

I go in the woods and go in a black gum swamp, where there is water. You'll find these roots that come up out of the ground, turn and go back down. Then I get this crook [to make the head and neck] that's with the grain. If you put a sawed head up there, it will split right off. If you hit it, it will split. A gum root won't. My daddy always made them out of gum roots. I make them out of roots. (CFS-WM-004)

He keeps wood for decoys floating in a bathtub in the yard, close to his workshop. The wet wood is soft and easier to work. "You can cut that like a potato when it's green, but if you let it dry, it's just as hard as flint." Some craftspeople make decoys into accurate, life-like representations of birds. But Percy Carawan prefers simpler decoys like those his father made.

I just make a working decoy. I don't make a fancy decoy. I'm not good enough to make real fancy decoys. A wooden block, a [homemade] decoy, a wild goose will come to it quicker than he will a boughten decoy. I don't care how pretty they are. [Manufactured decoys] are too light and bob around too much. A wooden decoy . . . they lay on the water like a goose. When a bunch of geese comes in with them [decoys] just sitting there, nodding in the water, they look like geese. It's because of the way they set on the water and hang to the lines. Real geese do not jerk about on the water. Wooden decoys ride the water like a real goose. . . . The goose knows more than the man, unless the man's got experience. (CFS-WM-004)

Percy Carawan's knowledge of waterfowl is evident in his decoys. To make the decoy ride the water realistically, he will balance the finished bird. He prefers to use sheet lead attached to the decoy's bottom with galvanized or copper nails. These nails will not rust. He is also very aware

of the market for “authentic” decoys, and he knows collectors will pay more for decoys that look old and used. Some makers, he says, fraudulently “age” their decoys to increase their value. These aging techniques include leaving the new decoy in a ditch for a month, covered by wet leaves. Some makers attempt to give the decoy the look of a working decoy by attaching an old bolt as a weight and even shooting the decoy with bird shot. Percy Carawan, however, does not “age” his decoys. “People want my decoys because of my age,” he laughs. Because he is deeply rooted in the tradition, his decoys are indisputably authentic. Currently, they sell for four hundred dollars. He remembers earlier times when decoys were not so valuable. One summer, he recalled, he and a friend made a hundred decoys and sold all they did not keep for five dollars each. His love of waterfowl, however, is what most impresses the visitor.

There was nothing in this world any prettier to me than a bunch of geese coming in [to land] and setting their wings, drop their feet out, and hit that water. That was the prettiest sight I’d ever seen. (CFS-WM-004)

Trapping

The many fur-bearing animals in the undeveloped swamps and woodlands of Hyde County provided area residents with an extra source of income. The trappers interviewed for the survey learned their skill from their families and other trappers in their community.

Marco Gibbs is perhaps Hyde County’s most successful trapper. A relatively young man (born in 1951), he began trapping before his tenth birthday, and he has served as an elected official for a national organization of professional trappers. His description of trapping reveals the rich tradition of this work. In addition to trapping, he works on the water and guides hunters.

My immediate family were mostly into hunting . . . but there was quite a few other people around that [trapped]. Being very young, I used to follow my father around a lot, and at these old country stores I’d hear people talk about trapping, especially bear trapping. That really got my attention. (CFS-WM-006)

His father kept some old traps to use for catching rats and other pests. To satisfy Marco Gibbs’s curiosity, his father showed him how to set and bait the traps.

I was about eight years old, and I had two first cousins interested in [trapping] so we just set a few traps in a ditch, close to the house where we knew there were some muskrats. We set several traps, and after about three

days we caught a rabbit. That kind of got us going. We still didn't catch any muskrat. It was the next year that we caught one and then another one and finally a third. Seems like the first [musk]rat I ever sold I got about a dollar twenty-five or a dollar fifty. That was big money! Later on I remember getting three dollars, and later on it got up around four dollars for the black [muskrat]. When a kid starts trapping, he graduates from rabbits and wharf rats to muskrat. Then when you catch a mink, that's real big time. To go after a coon is real easy. But after that [you want] to catch fox and then bobcat. (CFS-WM-006)

The limited success of these early efforts encouraged Marco Gibbs to continue trapping. To learn more he consulted some of the experienced trappers in his community. This arrangement also met with limited success. Competitive and protective of their reputations, some of these trappers did not readily share information.

When I was growing up, there weren't much [literature] about trapping. . . . People were real secretive about trapping. None of these people would tell you anything. In fact, they would give you misinformation, suggesting something crazy [for bait]. I remember trying two or three of them. After a couple of times, I figured it out [the deception]. (CFS-WM-006)

Eventually he found a mentor who passed along the skills needed for successful trapping.

It was later on [in the early 1970s] . . . I got to trapping with a preacher. He was from close to New Bern, from Vanceboro. He was a good trapper. His father was a good trapper. He told me his father used to walk a trap line that might be five, six, seven, eight miles long. (CFS-WM-006)

In eastern North Carolina, the trapping season is from December fifteenth until the end of February. Before the season begins, Marco Gibbs scouts constantly for places to set his traps. His trap lines contain fifty to a hundred traps, and he uses two or three locations to run a couple of hundred traps. He covers Hyde, Dare, Tyrrell, and Beaufort counties. He selects sites for his traps based on evidence of animal traffic, food sources, and such subtleties as wind direction. When he finds a likely spot for trapping game, he will "memory mark it." He compares an ideal location for trapping game to the ideal location for a restaurant.

Every time I go somewhere, I'm looking, scouting for places to run trap lines. I notice certain things fur bearers may use. . . . I look for trails, logs, bridges, creeks, canals, places where animals cross the highway. Good food in a good location makes a good trap site. Wind direction is important too. In this area, the wind blows from the north in the wintertime. So you set your traps on the north side of where the animals are traveling. The wind will blow the scent of the bait to the animals and lure them to the trap. (CFS-WM-006)

Marco Gibbs tries to see the trap site the way an animal would see it. Experience has taught him how animals approach the bait and walk around the trap. He buries his traps one-quarter inch to one-half inch in the ground. Usually, he buries the bait because "that's how animals expect to find it." He uses any bait that will attract the animal. Sometimes food is the lure, such as corn for raccoons and rabbits for bobcats. Sometimes the lure is a "sight attracter," an object that arouses the animal's curiosity and draws it into the trap. Old porcelain door knobs, for example, attract otters.

The first day of trapping is exciting. . . . [You] just try and get the traps out, just head over heels as fast as you can go. I start setting traps as soon as it is light enough to see, and work till I can't see. [I] usually get home about seven or eight; sometimes it is late as one or two in the morning. (CFS-WM-006)

He uses drag traps—traps that are not chained down. Animals captured in these traps can crawl away and hide. Dragging the trap, they leave a trail that the trapper can easily follow. Drag traps are preferable because the hiding animal is less likely to damage the pelt or disrupt the capture site, and the site can be used again. As soon as possible after the end of the trapping season, he overhauls his traps.

Every trap is cleaned and adjusted, dyed and ready to go. That gives them a whole season to hang there and let the smell of that dye get off. Dying the traps helps them blend in, keeps them from rusting, and hides the steel odor. If a trap ever pinches an animal, he'll remember it, and he's hard to catch after that. (CFS-WM-006)

Rather than skinning his catch, he refrigerates the animals until purchased by the fur buyer. However, Marco Gibbs will skin an animal if he wants the food.

Muskrat and beaver are some of the best meat I've ever eaten. It tastes a lot like veal. [It's] tender, better than deer. I never really learnt [skinning animals]. . . . There was two boys that trapped with me one year, and their father had [skinned] before, and he showed me how to do it. Trapping is a job, and skinning is a job. Most fur buyers in the South buy frozen animals and have them skinned. In the North, the buyers would rather have the hide stretched. But in the South, there has always been a labor force to tan hides. They grew up doing it and don't mind doing it. A fur buyer can hire skimmers and show them how he wants it done. Some fur buyers have a certain way of skinning an animal. Some may want more or less belly fur. Others may want as much of the feet as possible. (CFS-WM-006)

For a while, he bought furs from other trappers, but he moved out of dealing because he did not enjoy acting as middle man. About five fur buyers came through Hyde County last year.

Some fur buyers are specialized, but most take anything. Coon is the main thing. That's where the main market is. Some buyers didn't want the foxes; some of them did. But generally when you come into an area like this to buy fur, you got to be able to buy it all. These trappers [in Hyde County] like to be able to sell their fur all to one person. I've learnt to hold back if the fur buyer I am selling to is not willing [to meet my price]. You can tell how much he wants to buy something by what he's willing to pay for it. If he is not paying what I think he should on foxes and cats, I'll look elsewhere for those markets. Usually if he's wanting the coon, he's willing to pay for the coon. If you can get with a buyer that's willing to pay you a fair price straight across the board for everything, that's who you should deal with. If a person really wants to play the market, they should be able to skin, stretch, and scrape their own fur. That way they can keep it for years. (CFS-WM-006)

He has seen the animal population and the fur market change in Hyde County as land use policy has changed.

Beaver we didn't have when I was growing up. They have moved in. Nutria showed up here in the mid '60s. When I was growing up, many people trapped. All the land owners wanted trapping done [on their property]. They [land owners] had grown up knowing how much damage could be done by coons and foxes in the chicken house. [Muskrats] in the field can damage ditches and cause canal banks to cave in. [Y]our corporate farms hire managers that weren't from here and didn't know about the damage that these animals could cause and could care less. All they were interested in was making the money. To them it looked like having a person trapping on their property could be more troublesome than the pests.

It didn't take long [for them to find out]. The nutria really opened their eyes. I've seen tractors turned over and combines in the canals and ditches from nutria and muskrats undermining their canal banks. Trucks laying on their axles from where the animals' burrows caused the road to collapse. But now it's going back. In the past few years, I've had several land owners ask me to trap. It's nothing more than too many fur bearers on his property. (CFS-WM-006)

Corporate farming has affected animal behavior as well. Larger farms require digging more canals to drain larger tracts of land and clearing that land for cultivation. Animals migrate to take advantage of the changing terrain.

It took a while for the deer to get used to it. Muskrat and the nutria, it didn't take them long to get it figured out. All this land clearing helped the otter. I've never seen so many otter in my life. Otters were rare when I was growing up. The habitat to support the otter wasn't here when these big farms went in with all these canals and drainage ditches. (CFS-WM-006)

Forces outside of Hyde County have also affected trapping and the fur market. Hunters complain that trapping spoils their sport, and animal rights advocates protest the cruelty of trapping. Marco Gibbs counters that trappers help control the wildlife population. He sees trapping as a way to keep foxes, bobcats, raccoons, and other predators in check, permitting a healthy game population. When there is a decline in trapping, there is an increase in disease and starvation. When corporate farms banned trapping, for example, the population of raccoons soared, and soon a distemper epidemic decimated the raccoon population.

Marco Gibbs respects the animals he traps, and he enjoys being outdoors. When he talks about his love of trapping, he mentions its challenges and pleasures:

All the things that you can see and hear in a day's time, the peace and the quiet, nature itself. And how much these animals can outsmart you. It's not easy. They are much harder to catch than people realize. Especially one that gets trap-wise. I've seen places where there is so much fur you can't imagine not catching any. But those will be the ones that are hard to catch. There may have been some heavy trapping pressure in the area, or there might be some other predators making them cautious. It could be the time of the month, a full moon. A full moon is not good for anything but love making and fishing. When it comes to hunting and trapping, a full moon is not it. (CFS-WM-006)

Boat Building

Boat building is an important tradition in the area surrounding the Sounds. Two Hyde County boat builders who participated in the survey were Mike Mullen of Gull Rock and Robert Ross of Lake Landing. Mike Mullen is a serious, soft-spoken man in his late thirties. Although born in Cary, North Carolina, he spent a good part of his life "close to the ocean." His father ran a fishing pier on Emerald Isle where Mike Mullen spent his summers, and his brother works on a towboat running up and down the east coast. Summer jobs on fishing boats reinforced his desire to work around boats and on the water. After high school, he enrolled in the ship-fitting apprentice program at the Newport News Shipyard.

Cuts in defense spending caused layoffs in the shipyard, and he returned to North Carolina and went to work, first on fishing boats and then in boat yards on Harkers Island. After moving to Hyde County, he worked on fishing boats and repaired boats on the side. Planning to operate his own fishing operation, he bought a surplus boat from the Navy and began rebuilding it for fishing, incorporating ideas learned from his own experience. A man offered a "nice sum" for the partially

rebuilt hull, and that experience led Mike Mullen to building and repairing boats full time. He is especially sympathetic to fishermen, however, because they are out of work when their boats are in the shop.

His discussion of watermen gives the impression that he considers himself an "outsider," standing somewhat apart from Hyde County watermen. Clearly though, he has great respect for people who work on the water. "They are a rough lot, but they will do anything in the world to help you out." This willingness to help comes from knowing that trouble can strike anyone. "You're obliged to help a fellow fisherman 'cause the next time you might be the one requiring assistance."

According to Mike Mullen, commercial fishing peaked in the mid 1970s when boats were small enough to be operated by one or two people, eliminating much of the overhead and hassles of a big boat. Now fishermen are under the same pressures as any other businessmen. They must provide more and provide it faster than ever before. The trend is toward bigger boats, which cost more, are more expensive to operate, and require a larger crew, cutting into the take-home pay of the crew. In the payment system he described, expenses are paid first, then proceeds from the catch are divided equally among the crew, with the boat getting an equal share. The way to get ahead in the seafood industry is to move from catching fish to marketing them, and successful fishermen made this transition. Fishermen are extremely independent, but the proposed state ban on net fishing has brought them together. Fishermen, he relates, act as barometers for the environment. They are in the water every day and know when something is affecting their catch.

Robert Ross's connections to the boat building and waterman traditions are even stronger. Born in Swan Quarter in 1934, he has seen a decline in the boat building tradition. Between 1952 and 1975, he built approximately three hundred boats, skiffs, and prams. Most people in this region consider a boat to be a fairly large vessel used for work, an aquatic pick-up truck. Skiffs are smaller and used for commercial fishing and personal transport, comparable to an automobile. A pram is a small sport-fishing boat for one or two people. Mac Gibbs, agricultural extension agent for Hyde County, compared a Ross skiff to a luxury car: "When you had a Ross skiff, it was like having a Cadillac."

Robert Ross and his father began building boats in the early 1950s as the older generation of boat builders retired or died out. At first, they made boats for local people to use for working on the water and traveling. They provided an affordable alternative to factory-made boats. In the 1960s, the need for working boats declined, and Ross turned to building smaller boats for sportsmen. This market declined in the early 1970s, perhaps coinciding with the closing of the hunting lodge at Lake Mattamuskeet, and he turned to working on the water himself.

When he and his father began building boats, it was one of the many trades they followed. They operated a sawmill and a grist mill, trapped, fished, and repaired engines. Robert Ross, in fact, has relied on a variety of skills to make a living: trapping, fishing, building goose blinds for hunters, and also doing regular carpentry work. He helped his father build one or two skiffs for their own fishing operation. Cutting timber at their sawmill led to their first order for a boat about the time he graduated from high school.

We were sawing timber, and someone wanted a boat built. So we had built one or two for ourselves, so we decided we'd build a small skiff. What we're talking about is twelve- to fourteen-, sixteen-foot skiffs. I'd been doing some other carpentry work so he asked me if I could build a skiff. Naturally, I thought that was a challenge and tried it. That skiff went over pretty good. Some other people saw it, and there was another [request for a skiff], and another one. And I kind of got started there building out of white cedar. Locally we called it juniper. They were plank built. The disadvantage of them were the boats had to be kept in the water to be kept waterproof. The seams would open up if you put them in the sun where they'd shrink. But as long as you kept it in the water, you had a watertight boat. (CFS-WM-001)

When Robert Ross and his father built boats for their own use, they perfected their skill by trial and error. "I'd build one. We'd use it. We'd see the weak portions of it. We'd try to improve on that." But as demand for Ross-built boats grew, he consulted more experienced builders.

There were some other people in the area who had built boats, older people. And [they] would give me pointers on the advantages and disadvantages of separate cuts and different angles and the way that they'd work. One of them was Mr. Joe Pugh in Gull Rock. He built the boats there. . . . He built boats [ranging in size] from a small skiff up to [a] thirty-foot boat. That's a pretty good sized boat. Most all of his work was done with hand tools. He gave me some advice. One of the biggest [pieces of] advice he gave me was patience. He said: "You're gonna fasten this board here, and you're going to try and bend this board, and you're going to bend it and bend it and pull it. And about the time you have it shaped to where you want it, a couple of cracks are going to come into it, and it will pop and fly all to pieces. And the only thing to do is go off, sit down, and drink you a Coca-Cola. Let your nerves cool down, and you can come back and do it next time!" So patience was the best thing he told me. (CFS-WM-001)

Some of the boats were custom built; others were assembled in hopes that a buyer would come along.

They would tell me what they wanted. If somebody wanted one that was extra wide or extra narrow . . . that was what I built. . . . Some were built,

and I placed them on the side of the road on a rack there. They would come and look the boat over, and if it was what they wanted, then they'd buy it. A fourteen-foot boat would be the cheapest thing I could build out of cypress. I had the price as low as sixty-five dollars. That was about all I could cut on them. . . . The boat which was fairly a good line would run you about a hundred twenty-five dollars, and you could do a little bit more to it. Some of the last boats I built in the early '70s, I could sell . . . for about three hundred dollars. That was an eighteen-foot boat built out of white cedar with gunwales and painted. To make it a little bit stronger, I used salt-treated pine for the ribs. The same three-hundred-dollar boat, built using bronze hardware, would cost four hundred or four hundred twenty-five dollars. Bronze was much better, although a good grade of American-made galvanized nails would last about ten years. (CFS-WM-001)

Robert Ross represents one of the last of Hyde County's native boat builders. When he and his father started building boats, changes were taking place that would limit the need for the boats they built. In the early 1950s, "the boating in the sounds and the rivers here was becoming less and less." Fishing was declining. Military service and employment in defense industries lured many people away from Hyde County. Also automobiles began replacing boats as preferred means of transportation when the highways and roads improved. In response, he shifted from building skiffs that people moored in creeks and canals near their homes to building small boats for sportsmen.

Folks who weren't local and didn't have a ditch to tie up their boat wanted a boat to move around and store in their yard. A lot of people wanted a boat that could be taken out of the water and carried home. (CFS-WM-001)

In the early to mid 1960s, he started building plywood boats "small enough to fit in the back of a pickup truck."

Boat building was fading away for the commercial part of it. People were getting interested in some of the sport fishing. That seemed the growing trend, at that time, was for a small [sport] fishing boat. I sold right many of those. I had an eight-foot pram type which has a wide bow. And that might look like not much more than a tub, but it was something a person could take and get around in those little ponds. (CFS-WM-001)

Robert Ross continued to build boats until 1972. But declining demand and the difficulties of getting affordable high-quality material led to his retirement from boat building.

Another thing that got me out of [boat building] was the wood boat was becoming extinct. Fiberglass is what's taking over. Plus, it is harder to get wood that is of a good enough grade to build boats, especially white cedar. (CFS-WM-001)

Crabbing

Like many other resourceful people in Hyde County, Robert Ross turned to another occupation when he felt it necessary to adapt to changes in the region. In 1974, he built a twenty-foot work boat and a year later, an eighteen-foot plank skiff. He uses these for crabbing.

I started crabbing in '71. I was phasing out boat building right quick. I was crabbing in the winter and working on some other carpentry jobs, doing some house repairs. Everybody is racing to catch those early crabs, which brings a good price. Some years you catch them in April, some years it's May before you get any.

There are different ways of crabbing. I use the traps, called pots. You bait up your pots and put them out and check them every several days until you start catching crabs. Then you start working them every other day or every day. As soon as you start catching crabs, the price starts going down. "Supply and demand," that's what they say, or that's what they hide it under.

The best time of day is as early as you can start, just about daylight. For one thing, there is an old tradition of starting early. And . . . if a storm is coming up, it will be more in the afternoon. Not always, but most of the time. And in the hottest part of the summer, the sooner you get started, the sooner you get out of that heat. Sometimes you leave the dock about sunrise; sometimes you are out there about sunrise.

Though there is some that crabs different ways. A lot of the part-timers have a job. Maybe they get off at four-thirty or five. Well, in the summer time at five, you still got three or four hours of daylight. So they got them some pots, and they will go out there and add to their income. Some of them will crab a few pots in the morning before they go to work. If they go to work at eight, the sun's up a long time before eight. [Crab pots can be set] anywhere in the open water. At times, there are crabs one place, then another. In May, the crabs shed so they'll go up into shallow water close to the shores. You can catch them there. When the water is cooler, they go to deeper water. Used to be finding a place where there is a lot of shells indicated a good area, but a lot of it is trial and error. Crabbers will put out what they call sample pots or spotter pots [to locate areas where crabs can be found].

Scrap fish is used for bait. Most of it is menhaden, what we call fatback. At the time where there was right much haul netting, they'd save the scrap, small fish [for bait]. After the pots are out, you check them every other day until the catch picks up and justifies checking them every day. You want the work to justify the expense—don't want to come back with a sore back and sore arms and empty crab pots. You don't get paid for a day's work, and that gets old real quick. I'm a small crabber and use fifty to sixty dollars worth of bait, ten to fifteen dollars worth of gas. And you got your time, spend six to eight hours out there, right steady going. (CFS-WM-001)

When Robert Ross began crabbing, he used about one hundred twenty-five pots. The number has increased dramatically since then, and now he puts out about two hundred to three hundred crab pots. He keeps fifty to seventy-five spare pots and carries a few new pots with him every day, trading them for pots that need to be cleaned.

I pull the pot up, dump the old bait out, shake the crabs into a box, rebait the pot and use it to replace the next pot. Sometimes the pot is empty, and sometimes it has ten pounds of crabs. But ten pounds is a big catch, almost a thing of the past. Usually it averages two to three pounds per pot. (CFS-WM-001)

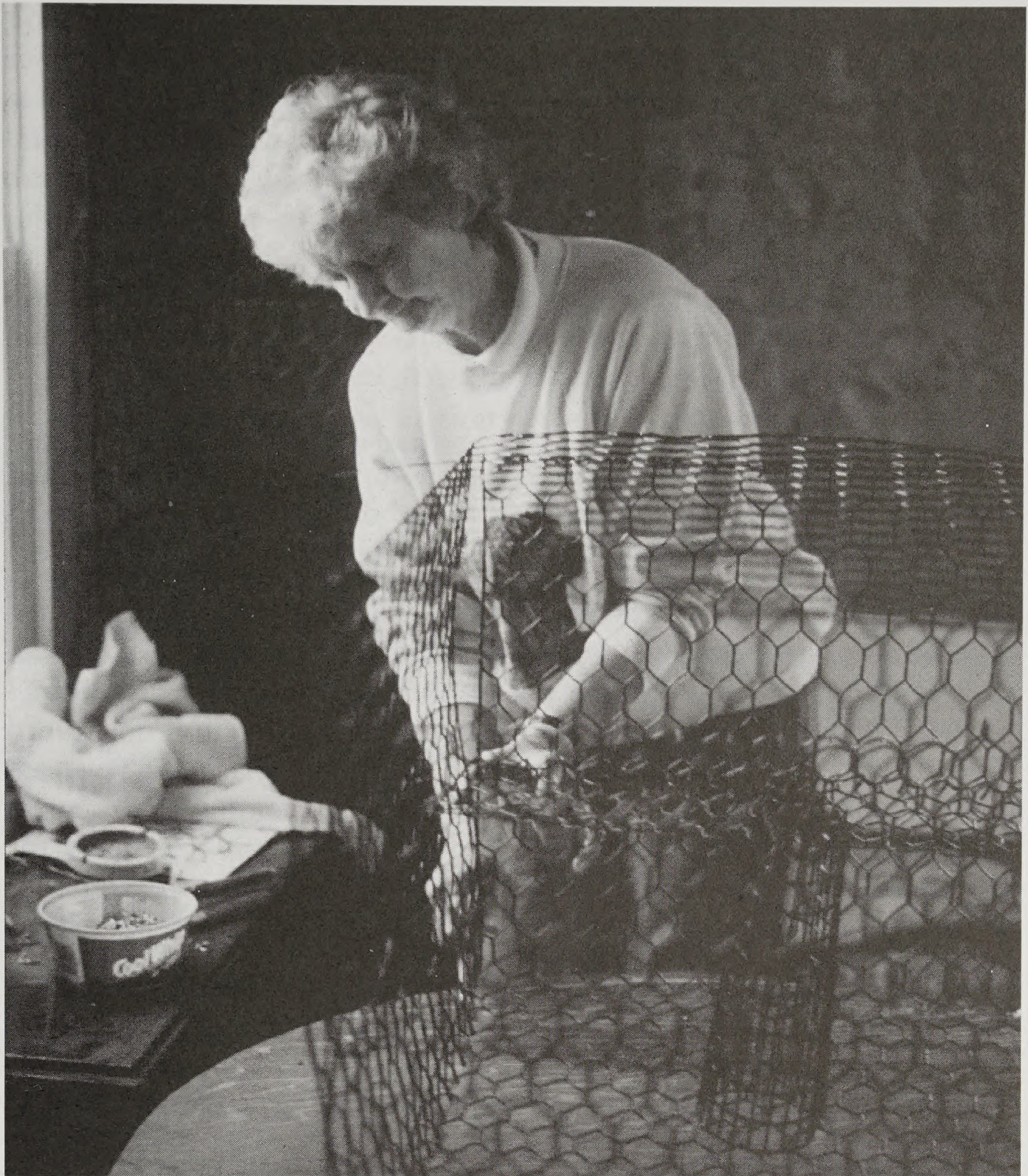
Crab Pot Making

Robert Ross makes his own crab pots. A neighbor helped him build one, and he learned to build them from that experience.

Most people buy them, but I make my own. I try and make them in the coldest, worst part of the winter . . . at the time of the year when there's nothing else to do. If you make your own pots, you get them like you want them. Some of the people who manufacture pots might build them better than I do. . . . There are places around that are doing a good job. (CFS-WM-001)

He uses a home-made contraption to make crab pots. The base is a table about two feet wide and three or four feet long. The table is divided into three sections of equal length. A roller above the left end of the table dispenses the "crab-pot wire," which resembles heavy-gauge chicken wire with a thick plastic coating. He rolls out the wire, covering the length of the table. An arm, which looks like the cutting arm of a paper cutter, swings down and cuts the wire. Once the wire is cut to the proper length, a clamp attached to the middle section of the crab pot table swings down over the wire, holding it to the table. With the length of crab pot wire secure, the left and right sections of the table swing up, bending the wire into a U-shape. The process is repeated for another length of wire. The two U-shaped pieces of wire are ready to be joined together to make the crab pot.

Before he joins the two halves, however, Robert Ross installs a divider made from crab-pot wire to separate the pot into an upper and lower chamber. A wire "basket" in the middle of the trap is for bait, and four entry ports, one on each side, allow the crabs to "get at the bait, but not to the bait." Wire "funnels" direct the crabs into the pot and discourage their exit. He cuts cull holes in the upper and lower chambers of the crab pot. The cull holes are exit ports, large enough for undersized crabs to leave the pot but too small for legal-sized crabs to escape. The crab pot



Libby Brickhouse finishes the top piece of a crab pot. Sound Side, Tyrrell County. Photograph by Jill Hemming. CFS-JH-002-13.

has a length of steel-reinforcing bar attached to the bottom. The “rebar” strengthens the pot and provides extra weight, anchoring it in place when deployed. He also attaches a zinc bar, about the size of a package of chewing gum, to the pot. This creates a mild electric charge that slows the process of corrosion. A length of line attaches a float to the pot so it can be retrieved.

Elaine Mayo in Scranton and Mary Helen Cox in Fairfield supply a much larger community of watermen with crab pots. Mayo’s Commercial Fishing Supply employs twenty-five people and uses power tools to manufacture more than forty thousand crab pots a year. It is industrial-

ized, high-volume production, but a close look reveals Elaine Mayo's strong ties to tradition. Most obvious is the informal way she learned to make crab pots: "a neighbor showed me how to make them." Just as significant, though, is the fact that her crab pot plant makes a specialized product responding to the needs of the community of watermen. Elaine Mayo "speaks" the language of crabbers.

Mary Helen Cox, on the other hand, has no doubt about her ties to a traditional occupational community, and she responded to an invitation to demonstrate crab and eel-pot making for the North Carolina Museum of History. She began making pots in 1980.

When my children were small, a friend asked if I would like to help her make crab pots. That way I wouldn't have to pay a baby sitter and could help her make crab pots, and that's what I did. When she retired, I started doing it on my own. I knew enough and knew most of the customers and felt I could make a go of it. (CFS-WM-015)

She employs four other people. The equipment she uses to assemble crab pots differs from Robert Ross's only in that it is hydraulically powered. She sells her pots as far south as Wilmington and north into Virginia. The price of the pots varies with the type of wire used. The least expensive pot uses ungalvanized chicken wire. Her shop is also diverse, producing crab pots, eel pots, fish pots, peeler pots (a trap specialized for catching peeler crabs), and holding tanks for eels. She branched out into other types of traps in response to requests from watermen who wanted pots made to their specifications.

Anything a man out there on that water comes up with, I'll manage to make for him. A few years back this young fellow from New Jersey come down here. They eel up there [and] their eel pots are totally different from what we have here in Hyde County, but I made him some. But they didn't seem to work as well. (CFS-WM-015)

Making eel pots takes more time than making crab pots. Installing cloth tunnels, which funnel eels into the trap, consumes most of the time. "I can make four crab pots in an hour. One eel pot takes an hour." Eels must remain alive to be sold, so she manufactures large wire pens to hold eels underwater until the buyer picks them up. Because of their size and shape and the difficulty of making them, Mary Helen Cox refers to these pens as "caskets."

Recently she has made pots for catching sea bass. The trap is similar to crab pots except it has stronger braces and a heavy piece of steel to anchor it. Four or five years ago she made some crawfish pots, but getting no further requests for them led her to conclude "they didn't work out too well."

Although Mary Helen Cox makes whatever kind of pots her customers want, crab pots are the majority of her business. She still adjusts her product to meet the demands of customers. Some crabbers think the color of the plastic coating on the wire used for crab pots affects their catch. To accommodate them, she manufactures crab pots of different colors based on customers' requests. She refers to crab pots made of yellow and green wire as her "John Deere" model because the colors of the wire are identical to the yellow and green used for John Deere tractors.

People who are catching "peelers"—crabs about to shed their shells and become the much sought after soft-shell crabs—request a specially designed crab pot made from soft galvanized chicken wire. The peeler pot is slightly larger and more rectangular than a square crab pot. Because crabbers use a male crab (a "hot jimmy") to entice female peelers into the trap, a peeler pot has a bait cage designed for holding the hot jimmy. Mary Helen Cox enjoys making peeler pots and calls them "the prettiest work in this industry." She also approaches her work with a good sense of humor.

Sometimes the she crabs are clinging to the outside of the pots when the pots are pulled in. Talk about a fool for love! (CFS-WM-015)

Lumbering

Lumbering is another tradition-rich occupation found in Hyde and surrounding counties. Forests of the region have always provided wood for houses, barns, and boats. In the last decades of the nineteenth century and the first decades of the twentieth, lumber companies moved into Hyde County and cut the old-growth forests. Several lumber companies still operate in the region, and a sawmill in the Grassy Ridge Mennonite community cuts timber. C.D. Gibbs lives just west of Swan Quarter. His father was a builder and, as a child in the late 1930s, he traveled with his father visiting sawmills.

I've always been interested in machinery, and something making that much noise just naturally fascinated me. At that time, the countryside was pretty quiet. You could hear a man whistling two miles away. A sawmill made a lot of noise. (CFS-WM-Field Notes)

Gibbs turned his mechanical inclinations into a career. In the early 1950s, he worked in Norfolk shipyards. Then he moved to the Ford assembly plant where he built engines. He enjoyed the work but missed rural Hyde County. So he returned home and farmed, fished, repaired cars, and satisfied his curiosity about sawmills by purchasing one.

It's called a "ground mill" because it sits on the ground at the lumber site. Nowadays, the trees are cut down and hauled away to the mill. When I visited mills with my daddy, they were set up at the site of the lumbering operation. (CFS-WM-Field Notes)

C.D. Gibbs began operating his "ground mill" in the early 1960s. His father helped him set it up, and veteran sawmill operators Albert Credle, Will Dodge, Kenneth Dunbar, and Garland Grant advised him on sawmill techniques. The mill provided lumber for local builders for about twenty years. It could cut framing material up to twenty feet in length, longer than local building supply companies could provide. Now it sits idle under the tin roof of a shelter about a half mile from the Gibbs house. Brush has grown up around it, and other items stored under the shelter are crowding it. Despite the brush and the clutter, however, Gibbs can still demonstrate how the mill works.

The mill sits on a large "hursk" frame supported by concrete blocks. Ordinarily, running this type mill takes two to three people, but he made a number of adaptations that enable him to run it alone. Using a system of belts, cables, and pulleys, he rigged it so that a single source powers the whole operation: turning the blade, driving the belt that removes excess sawdust, and pulling the lumber back and forth across the saw blade. The circular blade is fifty-two inches in diameter. At rest, it is slightly concave or convex, but centrifugal force causes the blade to straighten out when it is running. C.D. Gibbs described another facet of the work as "tuning" the blade—operating the saw so that it cuts true and straight. There is a fine art to tuning the blade, he said. He learned this skill by experience and by talking to seasoned sawyers.



Community Life

Community life is the collective—people choosing to come together in associations, congregations, celebrations, and other social gatherings. These groups play a major role in providing the networks and contacts that people need to take care of themselves, their families, and their neighborhoods. Through years of working together, singing together, planning together—and sometimes suffering together—groups mold their own identities. In a county like Tyrrell, which has only one high school, it is worth mentioning that more than thirty churches are active.

Religion

The role of religious life in these communities cannot be overstated. From birth to the grave, churches affect the lives of coastal people. Maintaining so many churches with so few people can be a struggle, but those who move away tend to remain loyal to their “home church” and send monetary support and offerings to keep things going. Annual reunions and homecomings at churches encourage this loyalty, welcoming back old members and recalling the family and personal histories that connect them to particular congregations. Gatherings such as the East Lake Holiness Church Homecoming, for example, not only honor tradition, they keep churches functioning in the present.

Bridging Generations, a history of Tyrrell County, dedicates several pages to the churches of the county, just enough to give a glimpse of their long histories. The stories and remembrances of people like Vonbeulah Bryant will complement such publications and also help bridge generations. Living near the Travis community in Washington County, Vonbeulah Bryant claims one hundred forty-six years of family connection to the Chapel Hill Missionary Baptist Church. Since its beginnings in a bush shelter, her family has attended and administered the meetings. She grew up listening to her grandfather, and then her uncles, preach to

that congregation, and she still attends Chapel Hill, now that it is served by another local preacher, Reverend James Rodgers.

Throughout coastal counties, congregations use varied ways to tell the stories of their churches: photographs or artists' renderings of earlier buildings, photographs of earlier pastors, memorial windows for deceased congregational members. These appeals to history foster a spirit of tradition and continuity over time—the kind of spirit that keeps Vonbeulah Bryant loyal to the “home church.”

Church traditions are so variable and numerous that they defy listing. Some, like homecoming, revival, and “dinner on the ground,” occur across all denominations in the region. At the East Lake Methodist Church, permanent table legs out in the churchyard are year-round reminders that come October, those legs will be supporting a homecoming feast. Loretta Phelps of Mt. Tabor says that on Mother's Day it is customary for the women of the church to wear roses on their dresses: white if their mothers are deceased and red if they are living. Many churches also honor outstanding older women in the congregation by naming a “Mother of the Church.” This woman is chosen because of her extraordinary virtue and dedicated service to the church. Other customs spring from particular theologies. Martha Swain carefully washes and presses the linen towels used for foot washings at the Malachi Chapel Free Will Baptist Church. Preaching and singing styles vary from church to church also. Reverend Rodgers of Chapel Hill Missionary Baptist Church, for example, keeps a lower tone throughout his sermons. Ondra Rodgers, his son, explains that his family believes in “silent” worship—meaning that some people can be just as full of the spirit in a quiet way as others who are more demonstrative. These differences of custom distinguish the churches from each other and give members a feeling of “rightness” in the familiarity of their own worship traditions.

For the majority of church-goers, narratives associated with conversion experiences and manifestations of the spirit play a role in religious life. These stories often surface during testimonies that occur during regular church services, but they may also be told during special events such as homecomings or family gatherings. Gus Basnight of East Lake has heard many people tell the stories of their conversions, and he can tell their stories as well as his own. When he was a teenager in Buffalo City, for example, he had a rambunctious Uncle Lundy, who drank too much. One evening, he says, Uncle Lundy came to a service intoxicated, with a bottle of liquor in his pants leg. When the spirit overcame him, he started towards the altar. But then he bolted out the door and ran into a tree. He got back up and threw his bottle into the canal. And then he went back in and was saved, cold sober. Uncle Lundy went on to become an ordained minister, and he organized the Harbor Light Church out in



“Dinner on the lawn” at the East Lake Holiness Church. Dare County, 25 May 1997. Photograph by Jill Hemming. CFS-JH-013-8.

Manns Harbor (CFS-JH-013). Gus Basnight saw his own mother cured of cancer, an aunt raised from her wheelchair to walk, and another uncle healed of alcoholism. Telling about such experiences is an important

tradition in many churches.

Church traditions do not magically exist—members actively maintain them in their worship services and other meetings. Small auxiliary structures within the church body often draw people together to the same place, face to face, to build community. Women's associations, deacon boards, and anniversary committees keep the church's group life vibrant by meeting the needs of the present and keeping organizational continuity. Frequently, the deeply committed, long-term members will hold the congregation in a cohesive unit by keeping a pastor with the congregation, assigning the tasks of teaching and working with the children, organizing birthday celebrations for elderly members, and maintaining the church building and grounds.

Church, as Ann Kaplan noted, is also the place where people make music. The most visible and widespread music tradition reported by all three fieldworkers is that of congregational singing and special music during church services. Both African American and white churches enjoy strong music traditions, and their choirs, congregations, and gospel groups are perhaps the best music resources in these counties today. Even though the music is all religious, it varies widely in style.

Also, attitudes about the music and about public performance of religious music vary. Some groups might welcome an opportunity to present their music in public, others would not. For The Happy Followers of Gum Neck Baptist Church, the most important part of their program is sharing their testimonies with other people. Relying on rhythm guitar, an electric lead guitar, a touch of tambourine, and their six voices, they sing old-time traditional white southern gospel songs like "Sweet Hour of Prayer" and "Glory Road." They sing in rest homes and churches, and they report that one of their most powerful performances was for an audience of one (CFS-JH-008). At St. John's Baptist Church in Alligator, Wednesday night prayer meeting opens with unaccompanied singing of songs from memory like "Enjoying Jesus, Hallelujah" and "Praise His Holy Name." Members have long forgotten where they learned all the songs they know, but the texts and tunes live on in the collective memory of the congregation rather than in the hymnals left unopened in the pews (CFS-JH-010).

Many churches are training grounds for musicians. Buddy Jones, who attends The Assembly of Praise, learned to play the keyboard and twelve-string guitar by watching others and picking things up by ear. He began to play music in church when he was eleven. Idonna Jackson, director of music at St. John's Baptist Church, has followed in the footsteps of her mother, Ethel, who led the music before passing it on to her daughter. Ethel Jackson learned to play piano by ear from Reverend Rodgers in Creswell, and she, in turn, has taught her daughter. Of course,



The Chapel Hill Missionary Baptist Church youth choir practices hymns, led by Ondra Rogers. Sound Side, Tyrrell County, 6 May 1997. Photograph by Jill Hemming. CFS-JH-004-20.

church music changes over time, and the changes often reflect outside influences. The immense popularity of the twenty-four-hour-a-day WBXB gospel station in Edenton introduces new songs and sounds that invariably make their way into local church music. The area tradition of “Singspirations” also encourages swapping music as various church choirs come together to share an evening of singing. Idonna Jackson, however, remains committed to older songs and song styles. She says contemporary gospel lacks an “old beat” that makes it feel like church. In her church, then, her preference for an older tradition keeps younger and older members connected through a shared body of music.

Older and newer styles, both grounded in traditional practice, co-exist in other African American churches as well. During a service at Mt. Zinia Baptist Church in Nebraska, the “Mothers of the Church” led the congregation in a heartfelt and moving older style of singing. In the same service, the visiting youth choir from Engelhard’s Faithful Hannah Baptist Church gave a strong performance in a newer style, but one that had traditional roots. Equally compelling was the singing at a baptizing service near Engelhard where the congregation of Mount Pilgrim Church sang stirring unaccompanied gospel songs.

The Mennonites hold a singing service on the first Sunday of every month. Their singing is entirely unaccompanied and congregational, a practice that reveals them as strong singers and well trained. The study of music is part of the community’s school curriculum, and students learn

early to read shaped notes and sing the harmonies of hymns and gospel songs printed in their hymn books. The congregation does not seat itself in families or even by vocal parts. Instead, the seating is an old-style arrangement with men on one side of the church and women on the other.

Church signs and murals occasionally reveal distinctive visions or perspectives shaped by the region. Many baptismal fonts sit beneath paintings of nature scenes or religious subjects like Jesus being baptized in the River Jordan or a dove descending. The nature scenes tend to draw on the flora and fauna of the coastal counties rather than some generic idea of wildlife. Pastor Paul Fonville of Plymouth has never studied art, but over the years he has painted both portraits and religious subjects. He painted the sign in front of his church, the Ministry of Power in Evangelism Church, and has painted several religious murals—including three for other churches in Plymouth.

Civic and School Traditions

Civic meetings and functions take place alongside the myriad church events. When explaining their preference for social life in Gum Neck as opposed to a place like Raleigh, Jacob and Arnette Parker put it this way:

Jacob: I'd rather go and walk through the field than do [tennis]. I mean, I love to come to town, play a game of volleyball with some friends or basketball, go to PTA or whatever. . . . And here, you know, you've got fire meeting on Thursday night. You know, you've got EMS [Emergency Medical Services] or EMT [Emergency Medical Technician] on Monday night.

Arnette: We have different commitments.

Jacob: But they're commitments to the community instead of personal.
(CFS-JH-004)

The majority of people living in the coastal counties still rely on volunteers to maintain their fire and emergency services—a tremendous effort with obvious social importance. Belonging to one or more service organizations becomes a symbol of an individual's commitment to the community. It is a way of building a reputation as a responsible and respected member of the group. This spirit of cooperation manifests itself in the hundreds of dollars that can be raised by a firehouse fish or chitlin fry for new equipment or a needy family.

Also playing a major role in community life are local chapters of the Order of Masons, Order of the Eastern Star, 4-H Club, Rotary Club, Lions Club, PTA, hunting and fishing clubs, and many other organizations. Formal and not-so-formal associations have led to the creation of com-

munity events in Tyrrell County like Donkey Ball (in which teams on donkeys play basketball), the annual 4-H Livestock Show, and the Wild Game Dinner on the last Saturday in January, where cooks bring their best new and traditional wild game dishes. An annual parade marches through Columbia on Martin Luther King Jr.'s birthday, ending with speeches and local preacher Elizabeth Spencer singing "Amazing Grace" on the courthouse steps. During the thirty-fourth annual Gum Neck Homecoming on the 1997 Labor Day Sunday, former residents returned to Gum Neck to "just eat and visit." Tyrrell High School invites home alumni for a Fourth of July reunion. During such events, community symbols and expressions converge in music, food, group humor, and storytelling.

Tradition even plays a role in the organized athletics that engage the majority of people in Tyrrell, Washington, and Hyde counties. The CWs—Creswell women's softball team—carry a passion for softball that now spans two decades and two generations. The "old guard" teammates are several women in their late thirties and early forties who played softball together in high school. Some of them have daughters and nieces who attended their games as children and have now joined the ranks of the team to play alongside their mothers and aunts.

Talking, Visiting, and Telling "Lies"

Do older social practices influence gatherings now taking place at community stores? In some small communities, a single store may be the only retailer, and it often serves as restaurant—offering sandwiches-to-go with drinks from the store's cooler—and gathering place. In some community stores, for example, specific benches were known to be regular seats for particular patrons—often places of honor for older men. Particular spaces in the stores serve as customary gathering places for men. Women visit informally in other places in the same store. Regulars know that rooms in the back, or even certain benches, are places where people play cards or tell jokes and stories.

Restaurants serve a similar function to community stores, though there might be three or four restaurants in larger towns. At the Heritage House in Windsor, a large table seats a local group of men who talk about events and socialize. Many such men's groups participate in a local tradition of telling "lies." Often these are tall tales designed to trick the listener for as long as possible into thinking they could be true. Bertie County's Powellsville Service Station is famous locally as the place where good talkers match wits in informal "contests."

Within any group, whether it be friends, family, or work associates, word play abounds as good talkers help others to pass the time. Sitting



Local men gather at 3 p.m. for a coffee break at the Scuppernong Café in Columbia. 28 May 1997. Photograph by Jill Hemming. CFS-JH-018-19.

around the long table at the Scuppernong Café every day of the week, local men from Columbia gather not only to catch up on the news but to swap stories and rib one another. In this setting, cups of coffee act as stage props for some virtuoso performances. Jokes, riddles, and stories arise naturally. Generally, group consensus recognizes the obvious master of words—the person who tells the biggest whopper, gets the most laughs, and holds everyone’s attention. Louis Spears of Mt. Tabor can barely get through a handful of sentences without starting a story about “so and so’s daddy” or cracking a joke on one of his friends. When he and his buddies get together, sixty years of community events and characters come to life. Judy Jones Cahoon of Tyrrell County kept her family laughing at the annual Jones Family Reunion with stories like this one about the huge number of kids in the family:

Mama was hard of hearing, and in Gum Neck we did not have electricity. They could not put electricity in until 1950, the year that I come out of Gum Neck. So you know, mom and daddy always would go to bed early, and daddy would say, “Well, Mabel, you want to go to sleep or what?” And mama would say, “What?” And nine months later there would be another one!” (CFS-JH-007)

Within occupational groups, a body of stories and humor relates to the experiences of group members. Commercial fishermen like the Davenport brothers of Columbia tell some hair-raising stories about

moments of danger on the water, while a farmer like Jacob Parker may joke about the uncertain nature of farming:

That's why they say Las Vegas doesn't want farm groups in conventions, because they can't make any money on them. I guess they gamble all year so they don't want to play the slots. (CFS-JH-004)

Recreational Hunting, Fishing, and Games

Because of rich natural resources, recreational hunting and fishing stand out as major pastimes in the coastal counties. The ever-present hunting and fishing gear, prized photographs, and taxidermy trophies in people's homes suggest their importance. Fathers take on the role of buying children their first guns or fishing poles, and many hunting and fishing parties are intergenerational as grandfathers share their knowledge with the younger folks. Passing on such knowledge can build strong ties and loyalties. For instance, avid hunter Basel Cahoon of Gum Neck spent his whole life hunting, and when his own son was not interested, he adopted a surrogate son and hunting partner and bought him a lifetime hunting license. In another family, Verne Crisp (who has retired to Tyrrell County and has fished Mattamuskeet and Phelps Lakes since he was a boy) has a son who loves to fish, but he is looking even further ahead. When his grandson was born this last December, he bought the infant a lifetime fishing license. Fishing ranges from cane pole fishing along ditch banks to fly fishing from fancy boats, and folks all swear by their particular methods, bait, and positioning. Hunters in the region hunt from stills or with dogs, pursuing everything from raccoons to deer to bear. Recreational hunters belong to clubs and pay dues these days because most of the land is privately owned. Countless individuals can talk knowledgeably and at length about the history of hunting and fishing in the coastal counties and, even more intriguing, can describe what skill is involved in being a successful hunter or fisherman. As hunter Wallace Craddock says, "There's an art to it" (CFS-JH-009).

A favorite summer pastime in Alligator is throwing horse shoes—a good game to play while people wait on food at a cookout. Kodon Leary of Alligator also remembers a game called "Pitching Quates" in which a player throws a homemade round disc towards a hole in the ground. The quate was made from melted down metal (using any metal scraps that could be found), poured into a tin-can mold, cooled, and knocked out. Philip Jones, who grew up in Gum Neck, recalls the homemade toys he had growing up and still knows how to put together a "traction caterpillar" with spools and rubber bands (CFS-JH-007). And all along the ditch banks on a night after a good rain, men in four-wheel drives scan the tall

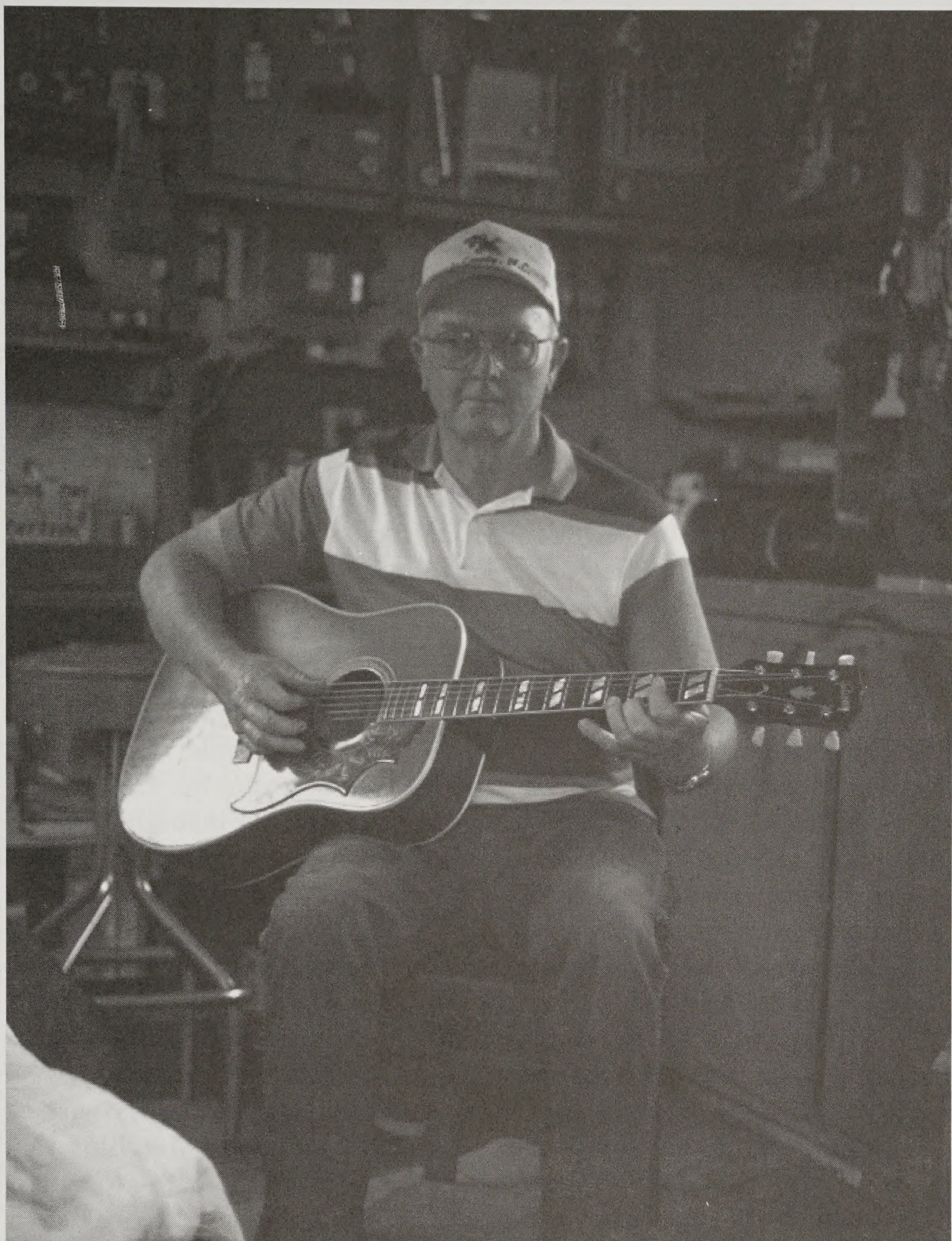
grass with bright spotlights, looking for stunned bullfrogs to spear in a long-time tradition of “gigging” or “frogging”—depending on where you are in the region.

Traditional Music, Dance, and Drama

Among the strongest and most active performers of secular traditional music are the Carawan Brothers of Hyde County. John, Macky, and Earl Carawan are part of a family tradition of music that goes back at least two generations. Their grandfather, Rufus Carawan, was a well-known fiddler and banjo player. Rufus and his brothers performed for square dances and at fiddlers' conventions throughout the region. Their father and uncles also played at dances and for contests. In the early 1940s, the Carawan brothers began performing with their father on the radio station in Washington, North Carolina. They, too, provided music for square dances and at fiddlers' conventions. In the late 1950s, John and Macky traveled throughout eastern North Carolina with a tent show that featured music, comedy routines, and a feature-length movie. The Carawans' professional experience shows in their tight, smooth vocal harmonies and sophisticated chord progressions. They sing a wide range of material from old minstrel songs to country hits of recent vintage. Macky sings lead and plays rhythm guitar. Earl plays lead guitar, sings harmony, and is an excellent bones player. Recuperating from heart surgery, John has limited his role to back-up vocals. Not only are the Carawans strong performers, but they have a wealth of information about musicians and music in the region.

Elderly area residents describe communities in which traditional music and musicians were much more visible than they are today. Leon Ballance from Nebraska in south central Hyde County talks about his grandmother who played the accordion and an uncle who played fiddle. Mildred Gibbs from Gull Rock recalls Sunday afternoon family gatherings that turned into singing marathons with group singing as well as solo performances of ballads. In the Fairfield-Kilkenny area, Etta Mae Cuthrell remembers her grandmother playing the accordion for house parties where the entertainment included singing secular and sacred songs as well as dancing. In the same area, William Cuthrell's father taught singing schools and played banjo, fiddle, and guitar. Bill Smithwick recalls the Rhem brothers providing music for parties and dances in Ponzer.

A few accounts of African American music and dance indicate that these traditions were equally strong in the same area. Johnnie Midgette, who is from Nebraska, remembers African American men from Columbia “playing fast music” on guitars. Hannah Macky talks about hearing a



Earl Carawan and his brothers continue family music traditions.
Fairfield, Hyde County. Photograph by W.T. Mansfield. CFS-WM-002-12.

musician named Manual Morris playing the guitar and harmonica. She also recalls dancing the “Huckle Buck” at a juke joint in Engelhard. James Topping, born in 1952, says that his Uncle Ernest Saddler “used to sit on the porch and play that blues music.” He also remembers hearing harmonica and guitar duets at local parties and juke joints. His grandfather taught him to play a piece called “Walking Blues,” which he now rarely performs.

Other accounts of African American musicians came from white residents. Virginia Pugh recalled how three young men would gather on a bridge not far from her home and make music. One played the mouth harp, another sang, and the third danced, using the bridge as a huge percussion instrument. David Hopkins, an 87-year old banjoist from Pamlico Beach in eastern Beaufort County, remembers his father taking him to hear "a colored man play and sing 'Nearer My God to Thee' on the guitar. You could just about hear the words from his guitar," he said. His father told him about a Black man making music on the street in Washington: "The man sat on a stool, playing the banjo and dancing. He'd throw the banjo up in the air, twirling it around. He'd catch it and keep right on playing."

Such accounts of traditional music give some idea of past performances but no idea of what the music actually sounded like. Fortunately, the survey also uncovered some home recordings of the singing of Warren Payne, Addie Gibbs, and Earl Pugh. The Payne/Gibbs recording, made in 1962, came from Ruth Wilson, but she does not know who made the recording or under what circumstances. It contains Victorian parlor songs, minstrel songs, old-time country songs, and several older ballads. Earl Pugh recorded his tape in 1976 as a souvenir for his family and included old-time songs, minstrel songs, a couple of nonsense rhymes, a hunting story, and a brief oral autobiography. He also recorded a few selections from African American neighbors Angie Bowden and John Thomas Bryant. Though both recordings suffer from poor sound quality, they preserve examples of style and repertory from a generation now mostly silent.

Often people deny their musical talents because they do not consider themselves "professional." Nevertheless, homemade music, often played by ear, continues in the coastal counties. Lonnie Sykes of Alligator usually carries his pocket harmonica—an instrument he has played by ear since he was a young man. He can make up songs and improvise or play familiar tunes like his favorite, "When the Saints Go Marching In." How many coastal families regularly gather around the piano to sing is hard to know, but Barbara Fleming of Columbia indicated more than a few when she explained, "Everyone here can play the piano." The Jones Family knows a number of older ballads and songs learned from their parents growing up on a farm in Gum Neck. Throughout the counties, friends bring their guitars and get together to play and sing country-western style music. Glyn Jarvis is retired from operating Jarvis Marina in Swan Quarter. He learned to play the harmonica more than fifty years ago with help from his family and a "Lonnie Glosson correspondence course." He plays very well, coordinating hands and breathing to achieve a sophisticated sound. David Hopkins, who lives in Pamlico Beach in

eastern Beaufort County, is a retired waterman. Born in 1910, he learned to play the banjo when he was six years old. Later he learned the guitar. He has not played much music lately, but he played some for Bill Mansfield demonstrating a “finger and thumb” picking pattern, leading with his index finger.

Square dancing has been part of regional culture in the past. Some Hyde County natives refer to square dances held in the home, and Grey Hopkins recounted square dances staged in a barn “at the end of a dirt road that leads to nowhere.” Others mentioned square dances at Barber Shanty, a dance hall located near the Lake Landing community. Virginia Pugh remembers Barber Shanty opening in the late 1930s. A local string band (fiddle, banjo, guitar, piano, and occasionally an accordion) provided music for the square dances. Glyn Jarvis of Swan Quarter mentioned square dances in the “Popperina” in Engelhard and at Gene’s Rooftop Garden in Fairfield. In the mid-to-late 1940s, when he attended dances, these places offered square dancing as well as more modern dance styles.

The “woman-less wedding,” which seems to be thriving, was the only traditional stage performance that readily emerged during this survey. Several communities have staged these locally scripted wedding spoofs and presented them successfully to sold-out audiences. Men play all the roles—bride, mother-in-law, jilted girlfriend—and make their audiences laugh by exaggerating the social customs and clichés surrounding weddings.



Domestic Life

A deep-seated spirit of self-reliance and thriftiness shows up again and again in domestic traditions. People in the coastal counties lived so long without quick access to store-bought goods that they learned to patch, make do, or find a homemade solution. This recycling ethic born of necessity persists even now when most things are readily available. Joseph Johnson, for example, who follows in the footsteps of his father, makes working machinery out of scrap metal and hardware castoffs—anything from a sawmill to a hydraulic shovel. He says that when he was five, his tricycle axle broke, and he went to his dad and asked him to fix it. His dad told him to try to figure it out himself, and he has been inventing and tinkering ever since.

Textiles and Needlework

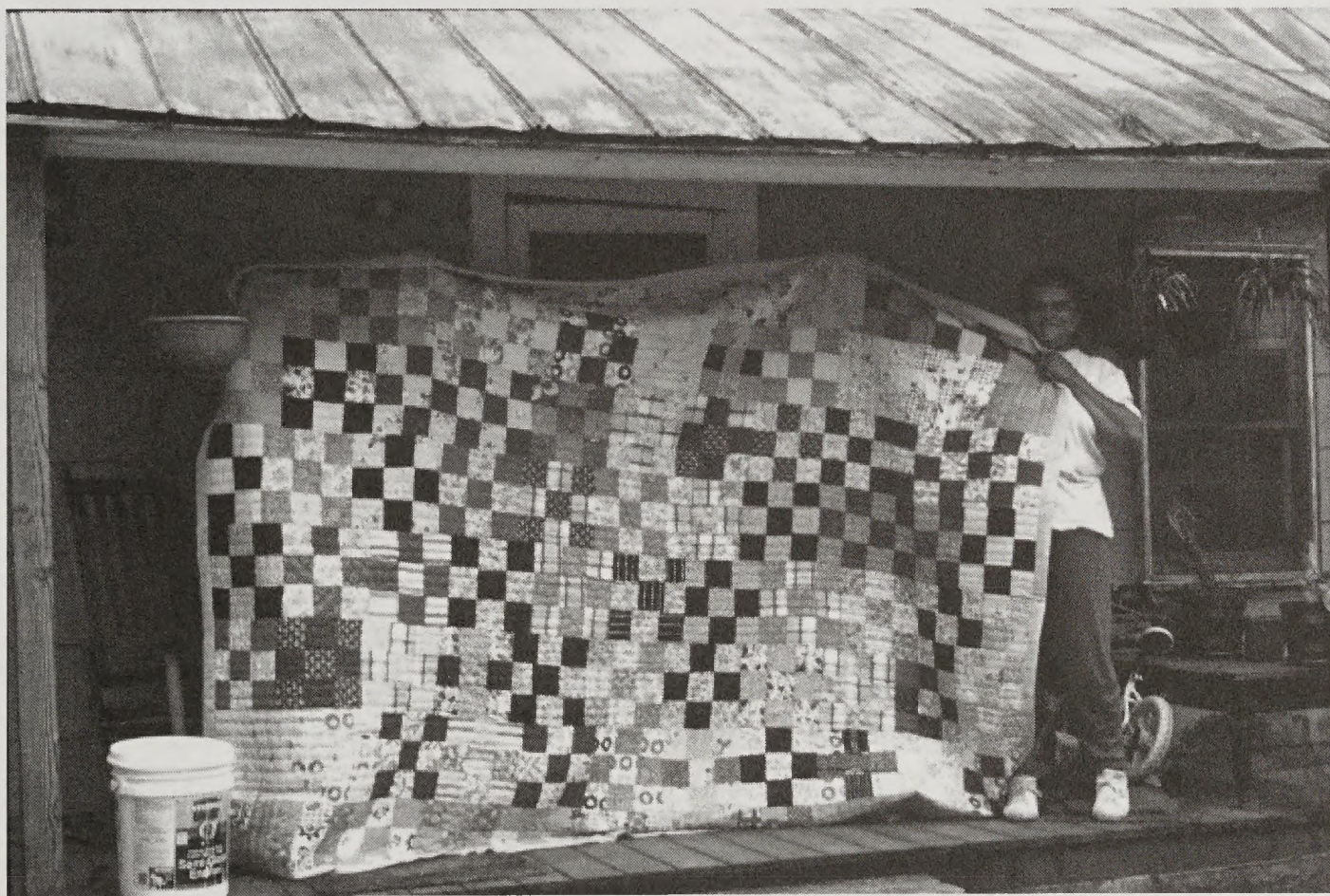
Textile traditions abound in the coastal counties. Crochet, embroidery, tatting, knitting, candlewicking, and rugmaking continue. Martha Swain of Tyrrell County has made some particularly interesting rugs. Using a wooden crochet tool made by her husband Abram, she has crocheted one colorful rug from funeral ribbons as well as another from her husband's worn work shirts. She can look at older crocheted pieces made by her mother and aunts, figure out the patterns, and make new pieces from these patterns.

Newcomers have brought their needlework traditions to the region. Dominga Martinez, who came from Mexico and now works in Roper, loves to do both embroidery and crochet. She developed these skills as a young girl and uses them now to beautify her home. One of her favorite projects is an embroidered pillow with crochet edging. She draws her own designs and then fills them in with vibrantly colored embroidery floss. These objects remind Dominga Martinez of home, just as Martha Swain's rugs remind her of important people in her life.

Quilting

Families throughout the counties own older quilts made by mothers, grandmothers, and great-grandmothers, and large numbers of women continue to quilt. Many of them still prefer the painstaking task of piecing smaller bits of cloth into a quilt top rather than quilting preprinted whole cloth tops. One distinctive pattern quickly emerged in this survey. Within the African American community in Tyrrell County, some women, like Anna Collins of Columbia and Alma McClees of Alligator, seem to prefer variegated patterns of square blocks, either with a random alternation of darks and lights or a systematic use of squares to produce larger, geometric patterns. The quilting pattern itself tends to be straight, vertical rows. The majority of these women do not use quilting frames, but place their material across a bed or a chair back to quilt. Other observations could be made about quilting traditions with more thorough investigation across the region.

Several women interviewed for this survey provided information about quilting traditions and the role quilting played in their lives. They all learned to quilt in their homes from members of their immediate families. They made plain that quilting does more than provide warm covering and the chance to demonstrate design and sewing skills; they also stressed the social importance of quilting.



Anna Collins displays a quilt incorporating square scraps. Columbia, 30 May 1997. Photograph by Jill Hemming. CFS-JH-026-13.

Thelma Armstrong Mooney lives in the Pleasant Grove community on the eastern shore of Lake Mattamuskeet. Born in 1921, she learned quilting from her mother and her mother-in-law.

We always quilted. I mean this community always done their own quilting. My mother quilted. Jim's [her husband's] mother quilted. All the community [quilted]. You made your quilt tops and then your bottoms. A lot of them was made out of feed bags, you know, the tops and the bottoms. You'd put it together, and then you'd say [to your neighbor], "Come and help me quilt." And then when they had one in, you'd go there of an evening. Most times it was evenings in the wintertime. They didn't do it in the summertime because everyone was busy in the fields. When summertime come, you didn't have time for that. It was just in the fall and winter when you couldn't do nothing else.

Oh, [laughing] you know how it is, we'd talk. Talk! Talk! Talk! First one thing, then another. Who was sick and like that. They'd tell tales and stuff like that. What happened and all. The news, we'd get the news. That's the onliest news we had 'cause we didn't have radios or TVs. After awhile we had a radio but if we had company we didn't run [the radio]. Sometimes we would maybe have a cake or something like that, and have a cup of coffee when we got tired. If we didn't, we'd just quilt two or three hours, whatever the ladies could do. (CFS-WM-002)

Etta Mae Cuthrell of Kilkenny also talked about the social aspect of quilting.

My mama used to quilt. She used to quilt with neighbors. They'd get her to come up and quilt with them. She quilted all over the neighborhood. She'd do her work and fix her dinner, and then she'd cook enough for the last meal of the day. And then she'd go over to wherever she went [to quilt]. Most times she'd walk and then she'd stay right there and quilt till ten, eleven. Just so she had a dip of snuff, and them needles, that's all she cared about.

What we did, the children would be the ones to stay at home, and Mom would go and help the other one. If Mama had any work to be done, we girls did that. And she helped them that made the quilts. And she was a good quilter; her stitches were real teeny, they were really short. She really could quilt. I love to quilt as much as she did. I don't knot as good as she did but almost as good. (CFS-WM-010)

Mrs. Cuthrell recognizes the activity of quilting is good for her emotional health, keeping her active mentally and socially.

I enjoy it. . . . It keeps you busy. When you get your housework done and don't have too much in the garden to do, then you can sit down and think about what you want to do and work on it. (CFS-WM-010)



Etta Mae and William Cuthrell show squares from her quilting. Kilkenny, Tyrrell County. Photograph by W.T. Mansfield. CFS-WM-001-14.

Virginia Pugh's fingers are too arthritic to sew. Still, she has fond memories of quilting and "quilting parties." Born in 1920, about a mile outside of Hyde County's Nebraska community, she recalled the names of three of her favorite quilt patterns: the Cotton Leaf, Church House Steps, and Ring Around the Mountain. The daughter of a freight boat captain, she recalls having free time for quilting parties.

People arrived around nine or ten in the morning and stayed until around three. You had to stew a pot of chicken to feed everybody. It was usually around eight people because you couldn't get more than two people on each side of the quilt. A quilt could be completed in one day, if people worked at it. The women would talk and gossip while they quilted. Gossiping is when you're tending to someone else's business—keeping up with your neighbor. (CFS-WM-007)

All three of these women reported that locally made quilts were awarded as prizes in charity raffles. Virginia Pugh mentioned a fund raiser for her Methodist church. The Ladies Aid Society at Thelma Armstrong Mooney's church raffled a quilt. The Fairfield Volunteer Fire Department, close to Etta Mae Cuthrell's home in Kilkenny, raffles a quilt each Thanksgiving.

A strong sewing tradition also exists among women in the Mennonite community in Grassy Ridge. The women make most, if not all, of their own clothing, and a regular sewing circle meets to make clothing for those in need. Quilts are presented as gifts marking special occasions. Each student contributed a personalized square to a quilt given as a wedding gift to a teacher at the Mennonite elementary school.

In Bertie County, although many women work as professionals outside of the home, a strong tradition of domestic arts continues. Professional women, as well as occupational homemakers, often make household items that range from bedspreads and quilts to curtains and doilies, and most tend a kitchen garden with a variety of vegetables and some fruit trees. Quilting traditions are very strong throughout the county with a concentration of quilters through the north central and northwestern parts of the county. The main quilting tradition features many very small blocks worked into designs that range from complete abstractions to representations of flying geese and the patterns of waves.

Soap Making

Eva Mizelle of Askewville, ninety-three years old, lives in the farmhouse that she and her husband built in the 1930s. She continues to tend a large garden of various vegetables and make traditional block quilts, corn-shuck mops, and reed brooms. She has recently stopped making lye soap, but she enjoys talking about how to make it and about how people used it.

Way back, as far as I can remember, my grandmother made the old lye soap. We killed hogs and would take the pieces that weren't good to eat, and we'd get the grease out. And then, long about April, we'd begin to make our soap. We had to make our soap because, you know, to wash our

clothes. We'd buy Red Devil Lye. And you take one can, and you take about two gallons of water and put in your old wash pot, make your fire, and get it to boiling. And when the water starts boiling, you put your lye in there, and you have to let that melt. And then you add your grease. It takes, well I'd say, about six pounds of grease to make one can. And you just keep a-cooking it, and it'll rope like syrup. You stir it good, and it gets thick, real thick. And when it heats up like you want it, and it turns to soap, you just let it cool. And then you cut it out, lay it up, and dry it. That's all there is to it. If you have time sometime, I'd love to help you make a pot of soap! It takes about two and a half hours, you know, altogether.

We used it to wash our hands. When we were puttin' in tobacco, everybody wanted a piece of lye soap to clean the tobacco gum off'n his hands. And we washed our clothes with it. That's what we had—had the old washing tub, the old scrub—you just scrub on that washboard. And lay your clothes up there and get that old piece of soap and rub on there and get it lathered up good. And then you scrub again. You had your old washpot over there. You had to put your clothes in there and boil them. You had to put you a little washing soap in that water. That's the only way we had. Along then, people didn't have much money to buy anything with. And if they had it, there won't much stuff to buy in stores to clean clothes like now. (CFS-AK-001)

Herbal Medicine

Lavita Garris, a Tuscarora woman living in Powellsville, learned medicinal herb growing and gathering from her grandmother. She is one of several women in the region who learned from previous generations how to treat illnesses with herbal remedies and other traditional practices.

Woodwork

Sandra Owens, a taxidermist in Sound Side, says she learned taxidermy easily because her carpenter father taught her to be comfortable with tools. Along the front of her property stands a row of birdhouses that she made a few years back. Phill McClees in Alligator makes lawn art figures and name signs that are popular enough to fill his spare time with commissioned work. Roy Smith in Columbia makes a variety of pieces including very fine cedar tables, miniatures of local architecture and boats, and custom birdhouses. William Baxton, who carves walking sticks, masks, and figures from local wood, carries on a southern African American tradition of African-influenced woodcarving.

Architecture

Even though the architecture of the coastal region is an important component of local folk tradition and life, we did not include it in this survey because historic preservationists have previously surveyed the vernacular architecture of the region.

Gardening

Flower beds and countless garden plots in the coastal counties testify to an ongoing tradition of tending to the earth. Ginny Wade's garden in Columbia, for example, spans three generations. Though the yard was first landscaped by her mother starting in 1910, many of the plants came from her grandmother's garden down the street. Showing off her poppies, she explains that they too have a story: "My grandmother had the poppy seed. Mother got the poppy seed from her. And then I got the poppy seed from my mother" (CFS-JH-011). From flower gardens to vegetable gardens, people in the coastal counties are reenacting long traditions of planting, cultivating, and beautifying. Some, like Bobby Phelps in Mt. Tabor, still plant gardens by the signs of the moon. Generally though, tradition is reflected in less cosmic ways: the choice of plants, the way butterbeans are staked and tied, the plot of land itself, or the tools and tilling practices. People like Ginny Wade, who know and can talk easily about the significance of a landscape, can make a yard or garden come to life with narrative. Walking among nearly fifty azalea bushes in the yard, she declares that every one of them came as get-well gifts from friends when her mother was hospitalized for various broken bones and accidents. "And every time I'd go to pick her up, I had more azaleas to take down than her luggage or anything else." The mounds of azaleas add a humorous note to her understatement, "She was accident prone, I guess you'd say" (CFS-JH-011).

Foodways

Cultural observers have long noted the profound role of food in community life and consider food one of the most stable forms of cultural expression. Indeed, the regional flair and variety of local foodways in coastal counties constitute an important cultural resource. Mavis Hill, who directs the Tyrrell County Community Development Corporation, can rattle off a mouthwatering list of local favorites before she blinks twice: red velvet cake, collard greens, fried chicken, potato salad, biscuits, teacakes, dipped and fried seafood, sweet potatoes and yams, fried crab,



Virginia Wade shows blossoms of a rosebush brought to Columbia from Alligator by her grandmother. Photograph by Jill Hemming. CFS-JH-001-7.

oysters, fry bread, potato fritters. Just as easily, she can say who makes the best version of anything on that list. Arnette Parker, in describing the annual Gum Neck Homecoming, says she can safely predict that Alma Spencer will bring her celebrated salt herring, and Zida Cohoon will bring her many-layered chocolate cake to the gathering. Homecoming would not be homecoming without them. At the East Lake Holiness Church Homecoming, the Spruill family willingly shares Grandma Minnie's chicken pastry. Even though it is customary for each family to feed itself, Grandma Minnie makes pastry so well, and it is such a treat, that the Spruills allow others in on the family treasure.

The vast amount of water has nurtured a bountiful and varied supply of food for local tables: fresh and saltwater fish, shellfish, crab, shrimp, eel, turtle, frog, and waterfowl. Herring runs, less prominent now because of various environmental factors, have not only left their legacy on restaurant menus that offer both corned herring and fresh herring but also on the types of local businesses. One seasonal restaurant reportedly consists of a small building by the river where herring are flipped out, cleaned, and fried on the spot. A number of small seasonal fisheries once operated during the herring run. One that still operates, Perry-Wynns Fish Company in Colerain, has been handed down through two families.

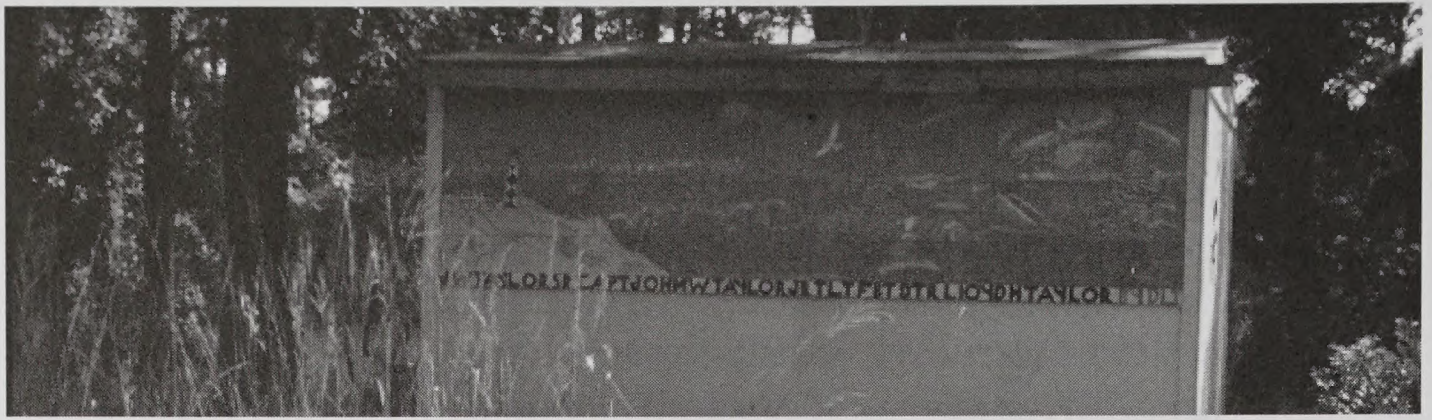
Different soil types in the region have supported large-scale harvests of peanuts, sweet potatoes, corn, soybeans, Irish potatoes, and wheat. Smaller family gardens have produced vegetables and fruits such as collards, turnip greens, grapes, beans, and okra. The availability of wild game also influences the regional menu. Hunters share venison with friends and family, and most people in the region have at least tasted bear meat. Small game such as songbirds, rabbit, and raccoon, though more rarely eaten now, are still part of local food custom. Pigs have been another significant food source. Though the long-time practice of keeping pigs and slaughtering them has waned in the past twenty-five years, pork consumption remains high, and people still eat parts of the hog associated with hog killings like the knuckles and chitlins.

Methods of food preparation follow customary patterns. Because people still cultivate big gardens, hunt, and put food by, the arts of pickling, bottling, butchering, making jellies, jams, and wines remain. Exceptional practitioners of these skills, Harvey Brickhouse and his wife remain largely self-sufficient by keeping bees, growing fruit and nut trees, grapevines, and a large garden, and raising goats, chickens, and a yearly pig. Harvey learned his lessons growing up on a farm in Tyrrell County—lessons on food preparation that may have passed down through generations. No "Institute of Albermarle Regional Cooking" exists in the coastal counties. If someone wants to know how to cook salt herring to please a

room full of hungry locals, they have to find a cultural insider who knows the customary way of preparing the fish.

On a daily basis, people in the region eat foods like ham biscuits, fried chicken, and collards—foods with a distinctly rural southern identity. On special occasions, food traditions become even more interesting. Doris Comstock in Mt. Tabor still makes a bag pudding every Easter from a recipe that has been in her family over a hundred years. This jellyish pudding actually hangs in a cheesecloth bag to firm up and then is cut up and served in milk with a bit of nutmeg. When her mother passed away, Doris Comstock, together with her sister, daughter, and niece, continued the tradition.

Although major holidays will still send some cooks scurrying to recreate the traditional tastes and smells of home, changes in foodways over time offer an interesting window into local life and culture. The decline in home-raised hogs has supported the development of a four-generation family sausage business, Spencer Sausage in Tyrrell County. What started as a butchering service for others has become a first-rate sausage company that services the entire Albermarle region. Owner Bud Spencer says that he has only slightly modified the family recipe that came from his grandfather. The once booming supply of herring that fed so many families in the region has nearly disappeared, making salt herring more of a regional specialty now than a “poor man’s daily food.”



Conclusion & Recommendations

Even in this brief survey, it has become clear to us that the traditional arts of the state's northeastern coastal counties remain active and appear in a wide range of forms: from medicinal plant knowledge to crabbing, to patterns of speech, to African American and white quilting, to gospel singing, and the list goes on. Here we have tried to give a few examples of what we experienced—even in a short time—as a richly textured folklife heritage. We encountered these traditions in great part because of our interpretation of how to do fieldwork research. We surveyed men and women, various cultural and ethnic backgrounds, different kinds of traditions, and a wide variety of locations in the counties assigned to us. Other researchers, even other folklorists, would meet people we never met and encounter traditions we did not find because the region has such a wealth of cultural resources. In fact, we received many leads we were unable to explore, and we heard about many knowledgeable residents we had no time to meet or interview.

Our first recommendation, then, is that coastal counties continue this work. This report is far from complete, and we expect that additional information will prove useful, especially for education projects and for economic development projects. For example, developing an inventory that makes traditional culture more clearly visible is a necessary first step in assessing regional potential for heritage tourism.

We also recommend that community education be a large component of any programs resulting from this survey. A key to successful presentations of traditional arts is that the occasion be accessible and enjoyable to many different residents. Enhancing a community's sense of its own identity at a festival, highlighting the contributions of an occupational group in an exhibit, sending students home to collect local stories for a class assignment—these are small and worthwhile ways to promote the knowledge and appreciation of local traditions. They are representative of a number of other practical suggestions we have included later in this section.

Finally, we recommend that folklife resources be included in any economic development strategy for the region. This involves both recognizing the economic value of folklife resources and also preserving cultural attributes that make communities distinctive. Such understanding will be critical to local communities as they face changes over the next few years. If development and outside interests focus only on using land and other natural resources for economic development, communities interested in cultural and heritage tourism may face the loss of one of their most valuable assets. Visitors and residents alike will take a dim view of seeing fishing boats only in museums in a town where ex-fishermen have to commute to the beach to find employment.

In the long run, local people will be their own best allies in assuring that the quality of life and the continuity of community traditions will not be destroyed. Efforts to save the land, water, wildlife, and historic buildings are certainly important, but it is just as important to ensure that the people who have traditionally lived and worked in these rural areas find support in their efforts to remain and work in their home communities. Factoring folklife and other cultural assets into strategic planning for economic development and heritage tourism is part of this process. Acting now to identify and preserve the cultural landscape is a priceless investment in the future of coastal communities.

Programming Suggestions

The following list presents a number of possible programming and project ideas suggested by this folklife survey. It is intended to be suggestive, not exhaustive.

Events

PUBLIC EVENT presenting the results of the Coastal Folklife Survey. This could be one gathering, or a series of lecture/slide shows for civic clubs, fraternal organizations, libraries, or churches.

Encourage LOCAL FESTIVALS to focus on what is culturally authentic and appropriate to the area, drawing on regional talents and traditions rather than creating a "generic" festival program that requires bringing in outsiders.

Communities can set up formal RECOGNITION CEREMONIES and give plaques to celebrate cultural contributions of outstanding individuals or groups. This can be done on a local level. On a state level, the North Carolina Folk Heritage Award needs to be extended to exceptional people found as a result of this survey.

Publications

Creation of a HERITAGE CALENDAR could feature images from the survey and descriptive quotations or stories transcribed from survey interviews. Important community dates like homecomings, festivals, or the first day of hunting season could be printed throughout the calendar. If sold throughout the region, it would be a good way to share survey results with a large number of people.

CURRICULUM MATERIALS for teachers. These materials, developed on a small scale, might support a short unit on coastal folklife that would encourage students to become aware of traditions in their own communities and become "experts" in their own culture. The materials would include a list of potential speakers, field trips, and contacts for teachers.

Self-guided TOUR BOOK for the coastal counties. A travelers' map enlivened with images and stories of the region, insights into local food, a guide to art and handicrafts for sale. This could be a long term project that would benefit from the groundwork of the survey.

Develop a SERIES OF ARTICLES in regional papers that highlight findings from the survey. Develop a theme like "Washington County: What makes it special?" to broaden support for cultural initiatives.

Exhibits

Develop EXHIBITS from the themes delineated in the survey. Displays could be anywhere from a museum setting, to a bank or library lobby, to an empty store window. Potential exhibit themes are almost too numerous to name. Some candidates:

Fishing	Woodworking
Domestic Crafts	Farming
Foodways	Music
Local characters	Local Events
Church Life	Hunting
Hogs	

A QUILT SHOW highlighting works by African American, Anglo-American, and Native American quilters. (The survey did not locate any quilts made by Native American quilters, but field researchers think such quilts are in the region.) Many quilters and non-quilters suggested such a show as the

first thing to do with the survey information on quilting. Quilting is something that people from many different backgrounds share. Although familiar, it remains a highly valued traditional art in the region. A quilt show offers the chance to display the work of local people, appreciate the differences and similarities of particular quilts, and reinforce the heritage of the region.

HUNTING AND TRAPPING offer many possibilities for exhibits and presentations. These activities reflect human interaction with the environment, making them ideally suited for projects to promote nature-based tourism. Exhibits could incorporate photographs of wildlife and hunters. Artifacts are plentiful and include such things as firearms, ammunition, traps, bait, decoys, animal calls, and mounted animals. The whole spectrum of hunting paraphernalia lends itself to display.

Exhibits could present the history of hunting and trapping in the region as well as related activities like guiding, setting and baiting traps, skinning, stretching and tanning hides, uses of hides, decoy making, and duck blind building.

WORKING ON THE WATER offers many possibilities. Crab pots, eel pots, and fish pots can be exhibited using photographs or actual pots. Photographs or mounted examples of the intended catch can be displayed with the pots. Different types of boats, their construction, and use would make a fine exhibit. The history of the boat building tradition can be presented using photographs, displays of tools and construction techniques, scale models, and actual boats.

Few FISHING-NET MAKERS remain in the region; however, photographs of handmade nets can be displayed along with examples of various fish caught in the nets. An actual pound net could be set up on land, giving people a chance to see what it looks like and how it works.

The TRADITIONS OF LUMBERING can be presented through exhibits. Photographs, both recent and historic, and artifacts can tell of timbering's traditions. These traditions can also be worked into festivals, classroom programs, and school field trips.

Exhibits could be built around HISTORIC PHOTOGRAPHS AND ARTIFACTS to present the story of traditional music in Hyde County. Such an exhibit would stimulate thought about the nature of folk music and the evolution of musical styles.

Performances and Demonstrations

One obvious form of presenting traditional music is through CONCERTS. The Carawan Brothers and Glyn Jarvis, for example, are among local musicians who could present a program of traditional secular music.

GOSPEL MUSIC is an artistic form many people enjoy and value, and one that would attract a wide attendance. A multi-church gospel sing or concert, for example, could bring a diverse group of people together who share an enjoyment of this traditional art. Local church choirs occasionally perform at neighboring churches now, suggesting that a move in this direction has already begun. Pearless Speller, a Windsor artist, suggested that one way to get people out to an event is by holding it in a location that they value. His idea was to present such a concert at a riverside location and have food available.

Displayed quilts, both historical and contemporary, make excellent backdrops for QUILTING DEMONSTRATIONS. Working around a quilting frame gives experienced quilters the opportunity to demonstrate their skill and talk about the social context of quilts. Spectators could join the quilting process. A supervised children's area could offer precut fabrics ready to piece into squares.

Traditions of HUNTING AND TRAPPING can be easily presented through workshops and stage performances. HUNTING STORIES are great for presentation. William Cuthrell, Marco Gibbs, James Topping, and Percy Carawan are all articulate and engaging speakers.

HUNTING CALLS (duck, geese, and others) can be presented in a performance or in competition.

Making DUCK DECOYS would be a very attractive workshop.

A WORKSHOP ON TRAPPING would be fascinating, although skinning, scraping, and stretching hides might pose some presentation problems. The use of fur in fashion is more presentable. Such a workshop might offer a platform for debating different points of view regarding animal rights.

Workshops where TIMBER WORKERS discuss their occupation would also be effective.

NET TYING makes a forceful demonstration. Given the current controversy over the proposed state ban on net fishing, this exhibit could serve as a forum to air differences.

Manufacture of CRAB POTS is a compelling demonstration. Mary Helen Cox is experienced, having demonstrated pot construction for the North Carolina Museum of History.

Demonstrations of SAWMILL OPERATIONS would be an excellent way to present the traditions of this work.

Demonstration of BOAT BUILDING and repair is possible, even though the materials are expensive and not easily transported.

Documentation Projects

Great potential exists for a collaborative ORAL HISTORY PROJECT with the African American community in Tyrrell and East Washington counties. A recurring worry among leaders in this group is the lack of documentation of their older people. Strong individuals like Dorothy Redford at Somerset Place, Barbara Hill at Tyrrell Elementary, Oscar Mason who runs the Tyrrell Youth Corps Program, Mavis Hill at the Tyrrell County Community Development Corporation, and Midge Ogletree at Tyrrell High School could, through partnership with an organization like the Southern Oral History Program at University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill or the North Carolina Studies Program at East Carolina University, find a way to carry out such a project.

Producing SOUND RECORDINGS of traditional musicians from the coastal counties is possible in collaboration with the Folklife Program of the North Carolina Arts Council. Such recordings might focus on archival or newly recorded material.

Selected References

The following is a list of the tape-recorded interviews and fieldwork referred to in the preceding report. Fieldworkers Ann Kaplan (AK), Jill Hemming (JH), and William "Bill" Mansfield (WM) carried out this documentation for the Coastal Folklife Survey (CFS) project between May 6, 1997 and June 13, 1997. Preservation copies of these recordings and other documentation from this project will be deposited in the Southern Folklife Collection at the University of North Carolina in Chapel Hill.

CFS-AK-002 Interview with Eva Mizelle at her home in Askewville, NC. 1 June 1997, 1 cassette.

- CFS-JH-004 Interview with Arnette Cahoon Parker and Jacob Parker in Columbia, Tyrrell County, NC. 8 May 1997, 2 cassettes.
- CFS-JH-005 Interview with Lonnie Sykes, Janice Sykes, Ray Sykes, and other family members at the home of Lonnie Sykes in Alligator, Tyrrell County, NC. 24 May 1997, 1 cassette.
- CFS-JH-007 Family reunion at the Community Center, Sound Side, Tyrrell County, NC (includes Judy Cahoon, Eunice and Doris Brickhouse, Lawrence, Buddy, and Phil Jones, Nellie Gray, Priscilla Mayo, and Dimple Taylor). 25 May 1997, 1 cassette.
- CFS-JH-008 Rehearsal of The Happy Followers (Burvell Jones, Barbara Jones, Dennis Russell, J. C. Jones, and Charles Cahoon) at the Gum Neck Freewill Baptist Church in Gum Neck, Tyrrell County, NC. 26 May 1997, 1 cassette.
- CFS-JH-009 Interview with Wallace Craddock at his office in Pea Ridge, Washington County, NC. 27 May 1997, 1 cassette.
- CFS-JH-010 Wednesday night prayer meeting and choir practice at St. John's Baptist Church in Alligator, Tyrrell County, NC (includes Ethel Jackson, Idonna Jackson, and the St. John's Baptist Church Senior Choir). 28 May 1997, 1 cassette.
- CFS-JH-011 Interview with Virginia Wade at her home in Columbia, Tyrrell County, NC. 29 May 1997, 1 cassette.
- CFS-JH-013 Interview with Jesse "Gus" Basnight at his home in East Lake, Dare County, NC. 31 May 1997, 2 cassettes.
- CFS-WM-001 Interview with Robert Ross at his workshop across the street from his home in Lake Landing, Hyde County, NC. 23 April 1997, 1 cassette.
- CFS-WM-002 Interview with Thelma Mooney at her home in Engelhard, Hyde County, NC. 24 April 1997, 2 cassettes.
- CFS-WM-003 Interview with William Cuthrell at his home in Kilkenny, Tyrrell County, NC. 24 April 1997, 1 cassette.
- CFS-WM-004 Interview with Percy Carawan at his home in Gull Rock, Hyde County, NC. 25 April 1997, 2 cassettes.
- CFS-WM-006 Interview with Marco Gibbs at his home in Engelhard, Hyde County, NC. 1 May 1997, 2 cassettes.
- CFS-WM-007 Interview with Virginia Pugh and her neighbor and friend Angie Bowden at the home of Virginia Pugh in Nebraska, Hyde County, NC. 2 May 1997, 1 cassette.
- CFS-WM-010 Interview with Etta Mae Cuthrell at her home in Kilkenny, Tyrrell County, NC. 23 May 1997, 1 cassette.
- CFS-WM-013 Interview with James "Little Brother" Topping at his home in Swan Quarter, Hyde County, NC. 26 May 1997, 1 cassette.

CFS-WM-015 Interview with Mary Helen Cox at her home in Fairfield, Hyde County, NC. 5-27-97, 1 cassette.

Photograph Identifications & Credits

Front cover & title page: Upper left, house and fields, Lake Landing along SR 1117 (CFS-WM-008-3); upper right, Larry Shaw cleans crab pots, Gull Rock Marina, Hyde County (CFS-WM-004-11); lower left, William and Etta Mae Cuthrell display squares from her quilting, Kilkenny, Tyrrell County (CFS-WM-004-11); lower right, concrete gravemarker, along SR 1303, New Lake, Hyde County (CFS-WM-002-18); all photos by W.T. Mansfield.

Back cover: Upper left, Anna Collins shows a quilt made of scrap squares, Columbia, Tyrrell County (CFS-JH-026-13), photo by Jill Hemming; upper right, Martha Swain displays handwork done by herself, her mother and her mother-in-law, Columbia (CFS-JH-033-19), photograph by Jill Hemming; lower right, Dominga Martinez displays handwork on pillow case, Columbia (CFS-JH-030-16), photo by Jill Hemming; lower right, Thelma Mooney shows her patchwork quilt, Engelhard, Hyde County (CFS-WM-001-2), photo by W.T. Mansfield.

Page 1: Thelma Mooney shows her patchwork quilt, Engelhard, Hyde County (CFS-WM-001-2), photo by W.T. Mansfield.

Page 4: Fishing boats docked in canal near Lake Landing, Hyde County (CFS-WM-004-19), photo by W.T. Mansfield.

Page 6: Abandoned house and fields, Lake Landing along SR 1117 (CFS-WM-008-3), photo by W.T. Mansfield.

Page 9: Wind paddle yard art, Roper, Washington County (CFS-JH-029-4), photo by Jill Hemming.

Page 10: Acrylic paintings by Dessie Norman, Pea Ridge, Washington County (CFS-JH-029-20), photo by Jill Hemming.

Page 11: Jeffrey Jenks (l) and Henry Moore prepare nets at Gull Rock Marina, Hyde County (CFS-WM-004-8), photo by W.T. Mansfield.

Page 13: Sandra Owens sits in front of her taxidermy work, Sound Side, Tyrrell County (CFS-JH-002-1), photo by Jill Hemming.

Page 14: William Cuthrell displays his handmade scouring broom, Kilkenny, Tyrrell County (CFS-WM-001-9), photo by W.T. Mansfield.

Page 29: Libby Brickhouse works on the top piece of a crab pot, Sound Side, Tyrrell County (CFS-JH-002-13), photo by Jill Hemming.

Page 33: Men clean up around the permanent table legs at East Lake Methodist Church, Dare County (CFS-JH-017-18), photo by Jill Hemming.

Page 35: Dinner is served on the lawn at the East Lake Holiness Church, Dare County (CFS-JH-013-8), photo by Jill Hemming.

Page 37: Ondra Rogers leads the youth choir of the Chapel Hill Missionary Baptist Church, Sound Side, Tyrrell County (CFS-JH-004-20), photo by Jill Hemming.

Page 40: Local men gather for a coffee break at the Scuppernong Cafe, Columbia (CFS-JH-018-19), photo by Jill Hemming.

Page 43: Earl Carawan plays guitar in his workshop, Fairfield, Hyde County (CFS-WM-002-12), photo by W.T. Mansfield.

Page 46: Mailbox art along SR 1730 incorporates maritime themes, Pamlico Beach, Beaufort County (CFS-WM-009-6), photo by Bill Mansfield.

Page 47: Anna Collins shows a quilt made of scrap squares, Columbia, Tyrrell County (CFS-JH-026-13), photo by Jill Hemming.

Page 49: William and Etta Mae Cuthrell show squares from her quilt design, Kilkenny, Tyrrell County (CFS-WM-001-14), photo by W.T. Mansfield.

Page 53: Virginia Wade holds up blossoms of a rosebush brought to Columbia from Alligator by her grandmother (CFS-JH-001-7), photo by Jill Hemming.

Page 56: Painting on yard building, Otway, Carteret County, photo by Thomas McGowan.

Fieldworkers

JILL HEMMING is a graduate of the Curriculum in Folklore at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. There she completed her Master's degree in 1995 with a thesis on Native American quilting in the Waccamaw-Siouan community in eastern North Carolina. She came to North Carolina from Utah, where she earned her B. A. degree in English from Brigham Young University in Provo. Her avid interest in folklore fieldwork is reflected in her participation in several folklife survey projects. She has worked with the Western Folklife Center in Elko, Nevada, to document rodeo traditions and create an archive for the Center. In southeast Idaho, she worked for the Idaho Commission on the Arts canvassing eleven counties to document all forms of traditional arts and culture. Her slides and sound recordings from that project have been used in educational programs in the state. Jill Hemming is a contributor to a new book, *To Honor and Comfort: Native Quilting Traditions*, which accompanied a 1997 exhibit by the same name at the National Museum of the American Indian in New York City. She lives with her husband Colin Austin and son Graham in Durham, North Carolina.

W.T. "BILL" MANSFIELD is from Raleigh, North Carolina. He graduated from St. Andrews College in Laurinburg, North Carolina, where he earned a B. A. degree in history and political science. In 1980 he entered the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill and began graduate work in the UNC Curriculum in Folklore. He completed his M. A. degree in 1992, writing a thesis that examines the role of the auctioneer in the brightleaf tobacco warehouse. An outstanding banjo player, Bill Mansfield has worked as an artist-in-residence with North Carolina's community college system, a curatorial specialist with the North Carolina Museum of History, a folk arts coordinator with the Bureau of Florida Folklife Programs, and a folklorist with Western Carolina University's Mountain Heritage Center in Cullowhee, North Carolina. Currently he is researching the folklife of eastern North Carolina. He lives in Greenville, North Carolina, with his wife, Lu Ann Jones.

ANN KAPLAN was born in Washington, D. C., and raised in Alexandria, Virginia. She earned a B. A. in Anthropology in 1994 from Mary Washington College in Fredericksburg, Virginia. In 1993, she served as Intern at the Smithsonian Office of Folklife Programs and Cultural Studies. After her undergraduate work, she spent a year living and working in Nogales, Arizona, on the border of the United States and Mexico. She began her Master's work in Folklore in the Curriculum in Folklore at the University of North Carolina in Chapel Hill in 1995 and co-curated an exhibit on Latina textiles in North Carolina at the 1996 Festival for the Eno in Durham, North Carolina. In the summer of 1997, she served as Intern for the North Carolina Arts Council's Folklife Program. She is currently working for the UNC Southern Oral History Program and is writing her master's thesis on Latina Cultural Activists in North Carolina.

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This special issue of the *North Carolina Folklore Journal* publishes the report of an important survey sponsored by the Folklife Program of the North Carolina Arts Council. Beverly Patterson has organized the work of three fieldworkers—Jill Hemming, W.T. Mansfield, and Ann Kaplan—into a discussion of the tradition bearers, genres, contexts, and functions of significant folklife in eastern North Carolina. *The North Carolina Coastal Folklife Survey* presents descriptions and analysis of the rich traditions of communities and occupations of the coastal plain. It makes excellent reading for anyone interested in Tar Heel traditional culture, can serve as an excellent resource in courses on regional folklife, and offers examples and suggestions for community study.

—Thomas McGowan
Past editor, *North Carolina Folklife Journal*